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BRONZE STATUETTES FROM THE ATHENIAN AGORA

EVIDENCE FOR DOMESTIC CULTS IN ROMAN GREECE

ABSTRACT

This study presents two deposits of bronze statuettes discovered in the Athenian Agora. Both groups were found with material associated with the Herulian sack of A.D. 267/8. The author proposes that these statuettes were used in the service of domestic cults. The Greek, Roman, and Egyptian deities represented illustrate the diversity of domestic cult activities current in Athens during the mid-3rd century A.D. While the deposits provide some evidence for Roman domestic cult practices in Athens, it is clear that Greek cult practices remained the dominant tradition.

INTRODUCTION

Roman bronze statuettes have been found in considerable numbers throughout the Roman Empire, but examples from Roman Greece are comparatively rare. Caches of bronze statuettes have been discovered in northern Greece (Paramythia),¹ on the island of Kos,² and most notably in Athens³; all of these deposits date to the 3rd century A.D. and were hidden away or buried as a result of increasing social unrest. The paucity of

1. Murray 1898, pp. 76–82; Walters 1899, pp. 36–38, nos. 272–281; Swadling 1979.

I would like to express my gratitude to Neda Leipen and John Camp for permission to study and publish this material. I also extend my thanks to the Solow Foundation for a grant allowing me to travel to Athens to study the Agora bronzes. This work would not have been possible without the invaluable assistance of the Agora staff, in particular Craig Mauzy, Jan Jordan, and Sylvie Dumont. I also benefited greatly from the advice of Wolf Rudolph and

Michael Hoff, as well as from the guidance from friends and colleagues at the American School of Classical Studies at Athens and at West Chester University. Thanks are especially due to the two anonymous *Hesperia* reviewers, whose comments and suggestions have improved this paper.

All dates are A.D. unless otherwise indicated. All illustrations are courtesy of the Agora Excavations unless otherwise noted.

2. Five bronze statuettes and a bronze bust identified as Geta were found at the Casa dei Bronzi; Morri-

cone 1950, pp. 318–319, figs. 83–85; Morricone 1979–1980; Bosnakis 1994–1995, pp. 60–63, pls. 9, 10; Sirano 2004, p. 968. From a Roman house in the Damsa district came three bronze statuettes and a small bust of Caligula: Kantzia 1987, p. 640; Dontas 1989. Both groups are published in Kaufmann–Heinimann 1998, p. 309, figs. 275, 276.

3. In addition to the two groups discussed here, a hoard of bronzes was found in Ambelokipi: Stavropoulos 1965, pp. 103–107, pls. 58–71; Daux 1968, pp. 741–748; Krystalli-Votsi 1995.

such finds is rather remarkable, considering the large quantity of Archaic and Classical small bronze statuettes that have been found in sanctuaries. There is evidence that during the Hellenistic period bronze statuettes were increasingly utilized in Greek houses, and this trend appears to continue into the Roman period. The majority of Roman-period bronzes have been found in Athens, and many of these come from the Athenian Agora; they present an excellent opportunity to study the character and function of bronze statuettes in Roman Greece.⁴

Classical Athens was home to a large bronzemaking industry, yet today there is very little evidence of its productivity. Bronze was expensive to produce and easily recyclable, and therefore scrap metal was heavily sought after.⁵ In Athens only a few large-scale bronze sculptures have survived to the present day, notably the Piraeus bronzes⁶ and a few fragments from the Athenian Agora.⁷ Nonetheless, bronze statuettes from the Agora are somewhat more plentiful, although they too tend to be found in secondary deposits commonly associated with destruction contexts. This is the case with the two groups of bronze statuettes that are the focus of this paper (Figs. 1, 2). Both assemblages were discovered in wells (Fig. 3) along with material that suggests they were discarded around the time of the Herulian sack of A.D. 267/8. Although they were not found in situ, the size, appearance, and iconography of the figures strongly suggest that they originally came from domestic contexts and were the focus of domestic cult activities. Whereas dedications of marble and bronze statuary were erected and displayed with a public audience in mind, these bronze statuette groups can provide information about the private religious tastes of Athenian inhabitants in the 3rd century A.D.

In this article, after reviewing the circumstances and locations of the finds, I will examine the archaeological evidence in the surrounding area, focusing on the remains of Roman houses where the bronzes likely originated. A catalogue of the bronze statuettes will follow, which will include discussions of identity, iconography, and date of manufacture.⁸ I then address the topic of bronze statuettes in the service of domestic cults and consider how the bronzes can reflect native Greek or Roman cult practices. While native Roman domestic religious practices have been the focus of much attention, due in large part to the finds from Pompeii and Herculaneum, domestic cults in Roman Greece are less well understood. Finally, I address the question of how the statuettes might reflect the ethnic background, as well as the religious concerns, of their owners.

4. This paper is an elaboration of material covered in my dissertation (Sharpe 2006).

5. With the rise of Christianity in Late Antiquity, there is little doubt that pagan bronze sculpture and other metal implements were appropriated for reuse. The recycling of bronze statuary also took place in classical times (Harris 1992; Perrin-Saminadayar 2004, pp. 128–130).

6. Palagia 1997.

7. Such as a bronze head of a Nike

(Athenian Agora B 30): Shear 1933, pp. 519–527. For a fuller description of the bronze head and more recent bibliography, see Mattusch 1988, pp. 172–176. A bronze leg, sword, and drapery fragments from an equestrian statue were discovered in 1971 (Athenian Agora B 1382–B 1385): Shear 1973, pp. 165–168; Mattusch 1996, pp. 125–129.

8. In descriptions of the anatomy of the statuettes, “left” and “right” refer to the proper left and right.

Figure 1. Bronze statuettes (Group A, 1–3) from a well located on the south side of the Agora (deposit J 18:2)



Figure 2. Bronze statuettes (Group B, 4–8) from the well of a Roman bath located in the southwest corner of the Agora (deposit B 18:8). Note the left arm of Tyche is shown temporarily reattached.



Figure 3. Plan of the Agora showing locations of the well deposits B 18:8 and J 18:2

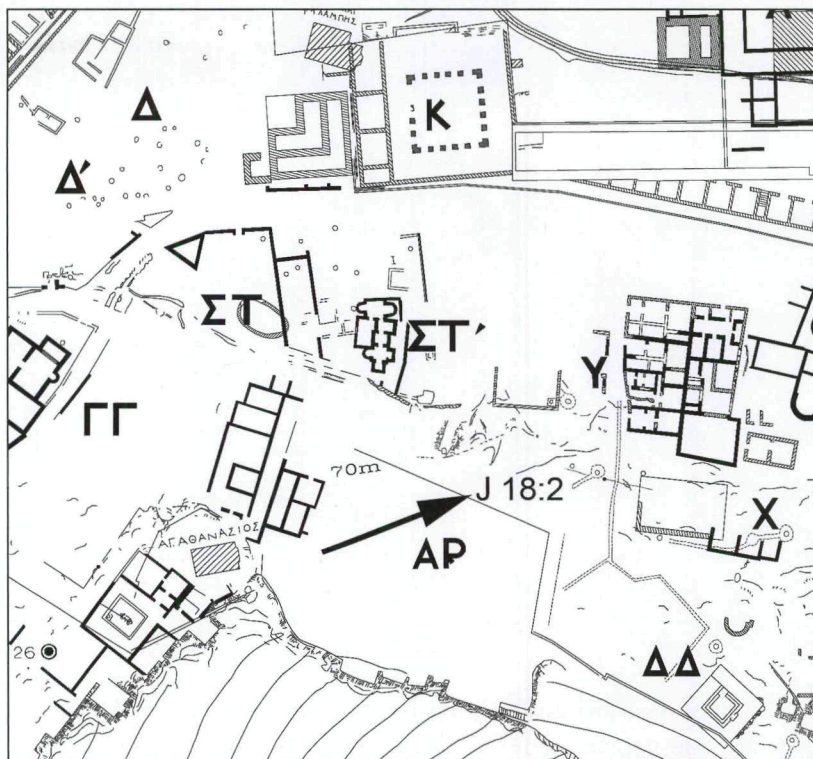


Figure 4. Detailed plan of the south side of the Agora with the location of deposit J 18:2. J. Travlos

CATALOGUE

GROUP A (1-3)

In 1937, three bronze statuettes (Figs. 1, 6–10) were discovered in a well located on the south side of the Agora between the South Stoa and the Areopagus (Figs. 4, 5).⁹ Found with the bronzes were pieces of unfinished marble sculpture¹⁰ (possibly from a nearby sculpture workshop), human skeletal remains, and pottery dated to the late 2nd and early 3rd centuries A.D.¹¹ The assemblage points to a destruction deposit made at the time of the Herulian sack of A.D. 267/8.

While there are no visible remains of a Roman house in the immediate vicinity of the well in which the bronze statuettes were found, it can be stated with relative certainty that they did in fact come from a house. One of the bronze statuettes represents a *lar* (Fig. 6), a figure that by its very nature is closely associated with the domestic sphere and with domestic religious activities.

9. Deposit J 18:2. Shear 1937, pp. 181-184.

10. The marble sculpture consists of a relief of a girl and a seated woman (S 855), a Hekataion (S 852), an unfinished statuette of the Mother of the Gods (S 853), an unfinished statuette of a male (S 854), a statuette of a Silenus or Pan (S 855), and an unfinished relief of Selene (S 857). Most of these

are discussed by T. Leslie Shear in the initial excavation report (Shear 1937, pp. 181–184).

11. In a review of the Roman pottery from the Athenian Agora, Henry Robinson (*Agora* V, p. 125) dates the use of the well to the second half of the 1st century to the 3rd century (prior to 267/8); dump fill consisted of material of the late 3rd to

4th century. A similar conclusion was arrived at by Judith Perlzweig (*Agora* VII, p. 226), who examined the terracotta lamps found in the well: the use fill ranged from the second half of the 1st century to the first half of the 3rd century, whereas the dump fill dated to the last quarter of the 3rd and 4th centuries.



Figure 5. View of the south side of the Agora (Middle Stoa in foreground) and the north slope of the Areopagus. Photo H. F. Sharpe

In the general vicinity of the well on the north slope of the Areopagus there are considerable signs that this area was used throughout antiquity as a residential quarter. Because of the proximity of the Agora and the views generally afforded by the upper elevations of the Areopagus, the north slope must have been a desirable location for houses (Fig. 5).¹² The task of deciphering the archaeological remains has been hampered by the continual reuse of the area. On the lower slopes, foundations of modern houses have almost completely obliterated the ancient remains.¹³ Traces of Classical houses have been discovered behind South Stoa I¹⁴ and on the northeast shoulder of the Areopagus.¹⁵ Late Roman houses are also in evidence,¹⁶ but for signs of Early Roman occupation of the area one must look instead to secondary evidence from cistern and well deposits.¹⁷ In the second half of the 3rd century there is widespread evidence of violent destruction; wells were filled and abandoned, suggesting that the area was once inhabited and that the occupants must have suffered considerable damage during the Herulian sack.¹⁸

1 *Lar*

B 413. Deposit J 18:2.

P.H. 0.176 m.

Missing right arm at shoulder and left arm from just above the elbow. Surface heavily corroded.

Fig. 6

The figurine depicts a young man posed in a lively manner common to *lar* statuettes. He steps forward on tiptoe with left foot advanced. His right arm is missing from just below the shoulder, but judging from similar *lar* figures it would have been raised to hold aloft a rhyton. The stump of the right arm is uncommonly narrow, suggesting that the right arm was cast separately and then attached. His left arm is lowered and would likely have held a patera. He wears a knee-length tunic with overfold belted at

12. Thompson 1958, p. 147.

13. Thompson 1948, p. 154; 1958, p. 147.

14. Thompson 1959, pp. 98–102.

15. Shear 1973, pp. 146–156.

16. Thompson 1948, p. 162; Shear 1973, pp. 156–164.

17. Thompson 1948, pp. 160–162. Remains of two small houses likely destroyed in the Herulian raid of 267/8 have been located on the southeast edge of the Areopagus; see Shear 1973, p. 156.

18. Thompson 1948, pp. 161–162. Additionally, on the northeast shoulder of the Areopagus a coin hoard of Imperial date was found, which, according to Homer Thompson (1958, pp. 155–157), was likely hidden at the time of the Herulian sack.



Figure 6. *Lar* 1. Scale 1:2

the waist. Two loops of fabric, likely from the cloth belt, have been tucked under the rolled fabric of the belt and droop down on either side of the waist. The figure wears calf-high boots with overturned flaps. The head rests on a tall, slender neck and is turned to the left. His hair is long, clinging closely to the crown of the head, but curling away from the face and up from the nape of the neck.

The Agora *lar* corresponds with the more common dancing *lar* type.¹⁹ Considering the poor condition of the Agora bronze, it is difficult to make stylistic comparisons with other *lares*. A *lar* found at Paramythia in northern Greece wears a similar garment, exhibits similar proportions, and is relatively quiet in its pose and action.²⁰ The two statuettes differ, however, in that the Paramythia *lar* wears sandals and is wreathed.

Attempts to narrow the date of manufacture for the Agora *lar* are hampered by the fact that *lararium* figurines may have been held in a family's possession for multiple generations. A survey of the *lar* statuettes from Pompeii reveals a considerable variety in pose, style, and quality.²¹ In their article on *lar* statuettes from the Roman provinces, Stéphanie Boucher and Hélène Oggiano-Bitar emphasize that context is not a criterion for dating.²² Although the Agora *lar* has a terminus ante quem of 267/8 A.D., its state of preservation and the current lack of information on the appearance of Roman Italic and provincial *lar* statuettes make it difficult to establish a date of manufacture and place of origin. A date range for its manufacture may be placed conservatively from the 1st to mid-3rd century A.D.

19. Representations of *lares* have been divided into two types: a dancing type with one arm upraised (Type 1), commonly categorized as *lares compitales*, and a static type with arms lowered (Type 2), traditionally referred to

as *lares familiares*. Both types are found in Roman houses. For discussions on *lares* types and their origin, see Roscher, s.v. *Lares* (G. Wissowa); Thomas 1963; *LIMC* VI, 1992, p. 211, s.v. *Lar*, *Lares* (V. Tran Tam Tinh).

20. Walters 1899, p. 37, no. 278, pl. VII; Murray 1898, pp. 81–82, fig. 33; Swaddling 1979, p. 103, pl. 53:10.

21. Adamo-Muscettola 1984.

22. Boucher and Oggiano-Bitar 1995, p. 233.



Figure 7. Aphrodite 2. Scale 1:2

2 Aphrodite

Fig. 7

B 409. Deposit J 18:2.

P.H. 0.195 m.

Missing right hand and left arm from above the elbow. Both arms appear to have been made separately and then attached. Feet and lower edge of the front of the himation are missing. Right side of head and forehead are severely corroded; neck and upper back are heavily abraded. Surface worn and corroded particularly on the back of the legs.

Standing contrapposto with right knee bent, the goddess is easily identifiable as Aphrodite by her pose and dress. She is clothed in a short-sleeved chiton, which clings to her upper body in a series of heavy regular folds. A himation is wrapped around her lower hips, revealing the upper swells of her buttocks, and is knotted in front. Her right arm projects forward at waist level, perhaps to hold a mirror or an apple. Her left arm may have been raised as if to arrange her hair or jewelry, or positioned lower to hold the himation wrapped around her hips. Her hair is simply fashioned, parted in the middle and rolled back away from her face, likely to form a knot at the nape of her neck. She wears a plain diadem. Her facial features are heavily worn, but the eyes, nose, and mouth are still discernible.

The anatomy and features of the figure and the garments are schematically rendered. The chiton clings tightly to her torso in a manner reminiscent of wet drapery. The fine folds of the garment are represented by a series of shallow grooves; the pattern of drapery on her torso is harsh and linear and is arranged in a rather abstract manner. The folds of the himation are fuller and slightly more rounded, but are similarly arranged in a series of sharp linear folds falling about her legs.

The Agora Aphrodite is an intriguing conglomeration of various Aphrodite types. The himation wrapped around her hips is taken from a popular series of sculptures, commonly called Anadyomene, in which the goddess is partially dressed, having either risen from the sea or just finished bathing.²³ Traditionally her arms are shown raised to arrange or dry her hair, but modifications to this popular pose were extremely common, particularly in the Late Hellenistic and Roman periods. Occasionally, Aphrodite is depicted with one hand holding the knotted fabric in front of her pelvis and the other arm outstretched, holding a mirror.²⁴ Our Aphrodite is similarly posed, but the lowered right hand may have held an apple rather than a mirror, as suggested by extant bronze statuettes in the Metropolitan Museum of Art²⁵ and the Bibliothèque Nationale.²⁶ Aphrodite sculptures showing the goddess dressed only with a himation wrapped around the hips were popular throughout the Mediterranean and survive in varying sizes and media. Hellenistic and Roman terracotta statuettes of the goddess are not only plentiful but exhibit a great deal of creativity regarding pose and attributes, in contrast to marble examples.²⁷ Marble statuettes of Aphrodite Anadyomene were also popular, perhaps on account of the soft, luminous quality of the stone, which seems to have been especially appropriate for portraying the pale skin of nude and partially nude figures of the goddess. Athens in particular seems to have been a major production center of such statuettes in the Hellenistic and Roman periods.²⁸

The Agora bronze Aphrodite, with her rather unusual style of dress, does not completely resemble the numerous Aphrodite Anadyomene figurines found in Athens. Whereas the half-dressed Anadyomene type was rather common, the Agora bronze Aphrodite is fully dressed in a short-sleeved chiton and himation; thus she cannot be considered an Anadyomene. The combination of chiton and himation wrapped around the hips is uncommon but can be found on a series of Isis-Aphrodite bronze statuettes that, according to Marie-Odile Jentel and Annalis Leibundgut, originated in Syria.²⁹ In the series, Aphrodite wears a short-sleeved chiton with a himation loosely wrapped around her hips. She typically stands in a *pudica* pose, with the right hand held in front of her breasts and the left hand held over her pelvis occasionally holding a fold of her himation. Two statuettes belonging to this series can be associated with domestic contexts: one was discovered in the Casa dei Bronzi on Kos,³⁰ and the other was

23. *LIMC* II, 1984, pp. 76–77, nos. 667–687, pls. 66–68, s.v. Aphrodite (A. Delivorrias, G. Berger-Doer, and A. Kossatz-Deissmann).

24. *LIMC* II, 1984, p. 78, nos. 688–695, pl. 69, s.v. Aphrodite (A. Delivorrias, G. Berger-Doer, and A. Kossatz-Deissmann).

25. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art 1972.118.96; *LIMC* II, 1984, p. 83, no. 742, pl. 73, s.v. Aphrodite (A. Delivorrias, G. Berger-Doer, and A. Kossatz-Deissmann).

26. Babelon, Blanchet, and Gautier 1895, pp. 98–99, no. 222.

27. Besques 1971–1972, p. 47,

no. D 273, pl. 56b; p. 95, no. D 569, pl. 121b; p. 127, no. D 852, pl. 156c; Tsakalou-Tzanavari 2002, pp. 260–262, nos. 266–270, pls. 74–76.

28. A number of marble statuettes of the goddess have been found on the slopes of the Acropolis (Bieber 1977, p. 64, fig. 224, pl. 39), and numerous examples in the Athenian Agora. I wish to thank Andrew Stewart for this information and for the advice he has provided regarding the cult of Aphrodite in Athens (pers. comm.; see also Stewart 2012).

29. Leibundgut 1980, pp. 55–56, no. 50, pls. 70, 71; Jentel 1981. Lei-

bundgut points out that a number of these Aphrodite statuettes can be found in the de Clercq Collection, which was assembled in Syria. See Ridder 1905, pp. 40–43, 83, nos. 37–40, 114, pls. V, VI, VII, XXV.

30. Morricone 1950, pp. 318–319, fig. 83; Bosnakis 1994–1995, p. 61, pl. 9; Sirano 2004, p. 968, fig. 9. Coins found in the house, issued by Gallienus and Salonina and dating between 253 and 268, suggest that the house burned down shortly after the middle of the third century (Morricone 1950, pp. 318–319).

found in a hoard in close proximity to a house in Sais/Sa el-Haggar in the western Nile Delta.³¹ Representations of Aphrodite were especially prominent in Hellenistic houses and remained highly popular in the Imperial era. In Roman Egypt, Aphrodite was commonly assimilated with Isis, and as Isis-Aphrodite the goddess played a prominent role in the religious and domestic lives of women. A number of bronze statuettes of Aphrodite and Isis-Aphrodite have been found in Roman Egyptian houses and, according to marriage documents preserved on papyrus, were a traditional part of a bride's dowry, serving to ensure marital happiness and fertility.³²

An Imperial date for the Agora Aphrodite is suggested not only by her type of dress, but also by the schematic modeling of the drapery. A 3rd-century terracotta statuette of Aphrodite found in the Athenian Agora is less well modeled but demonstrates a similarly cursory treatment of the drapery of the himation.³³ In addition, a number of draped female marble sculptures of Aphrodite dating to the 2nd century exhibit the same finely crinkled, wet-drapery effect demonstrated by the Agora bronze statuette. These include a Hadrianic statue from the Baths of Argos, a Late Hadrianic/Early Antonine statue found in front of the Nymphaion in the Athenian Agora, and an Antonine statue from Lappa (Argyroupolis), Crete.³⁴ Based on these comparanda, a 2nd- to early-3rd-century date for the Agora Aphrodite is likely.

3 Isis Lactans

Figs. 8–10

B 412 + B 2119. Deposit J 18:2.

P.H. 0.17, Harpokrates 0.61 m.

Only the front portion of the figure (B 412) is preserved. The head (B 2119) has broken off and is in very bad condition. The back of the figure, except for the upper back, is entirely missing. More than likely, the seated figure was never cast fully in the round, as the back portion would have been hidden by the chair or throne on which the goddess sat. The left arm is missing, and there is a large hole in the garment at the right knee. The figure of the child Harpokrates (Fig. 9) has become detached from the Isis figure and is in poor condition. The surfaces of the two figurines are heavily worn.

The seated goddess is recognizable as Isis Lactans by her characteristic garment and pose. The goddess sits in a relaxed manner with her right foot advanced and her left foot pulled back. Her torso is slightly twisted with her right shoulder tilted forward and down toward the infant Harpokrates. A depression on Isis's left thigh indicates where her child would have sat, and her pose indicates that she would have been breastfeeding him: her right arm is held across her body with the right hand pressed to her left breast. Her left arm presumably would have cradled the body of Harpokrates. Isis appears to wear a chiton and himation, with the characteristic knot tied between her breasts. The head is badly eroded, and most of the facial features are barely distinguishable. Short ringlets of hair, typical of Hellenized representations of the goddess, are visible behind the right ear and at the nape of the neck (Fig. 10). A hole on top of the head suggests that she once wore some type of headdress.

Representations of Isis Lactans have a long history in Egyptian art. A more Hellenized version of this type seems to have been introduced in Alexandria as early as the 2nd century B.C.³⁵ During the Hellenistic

31. The hoard dates to the Early to Middle Imperial period (Kaufmann-Heinimann 2004, pp. 252–254, fig. 10).

32. Burkhalter 1990. The marriage contracts range in date from the early 2nd century to ca. 230. Burkhalter also refers to two bronze statuettes of Aphrodite found in houses in Karanis (Egypt), which date to approximately the same time period.

33. Athenian Agora T 1555: *Agora* VI, p. 43, no. 6, pl. 1.

34. Karanastassis 1986, pp. 282–285, nos. A I 12 (Argos), A I 16 (Athenian Agora), A I 21 (Lappa, Crete).

35. Tran Tam Tinh 1973, p. 31.



Figure 8. Isis Lactans 3. Scale 1:2



Figure 9 (*above*). Detail of the Harpokrates figure from the Isis Lactans statuette 3. Scale 1:1.



Figure 10 (*right*). Detailed views of the head of the Isis Lactans statuette 3. Scale 1:1

period, the cult of Isis and Sarapis was promoted by the Ptolemies and a sanctuary dedicated to the gods was founded in Alexandria by Ptolemy IV and Arsinoe III.³⁶ The traditional iconography of Isis Lactans presented in a new Greek artistic style certainly would have appealed to the Greek population of Alexandria, and the popularity of the Egyptian cult of Isis during the Hellenistic and Roman periods ensured that this updated cult image spread quickly throughout the Mediterranean world. As in more traditional representations of the goddess, the Hellenized Isis Lactans is depicted seated, probably on a throne, with the baby Harpokrates cradled in her lap. She wears traditional Egyptian dress with the characteristic Isis knot, and a *basileion* crown (a solar disk between two horns) had probably been attached to her head. By contrast with the Egyptian images, however, the pose and artistic style of this statuette are much more naturalistic, in keeping with Greek artistic traditions.

36. Dunand 1973, vol. 1, pp. 110–111.

In spite of the poor condition of the Agora Isis statuette, similarities with other Isis Lactans figures are clearly evident. In his study of the Isis Lactans type, Vincent Tran Tam Tinh proposes that the prototype can be dated as early as the 2nd century B.C., although the vast majority of extant examples come from the 1st to 3rd centuries A.D.³⁷ Regardless of date, most of these sculptures depict Isis in the same manner: seated, right foot extended forward, child cradled in her left arm and seated on her left leg, and right hand placed over or under her breast. The goddess is frequently shown inclined forward toward her child. She is sometimes portrayed more erect, but this might have been a practical choice made by artists who worked in relief sculpture (coroplasts in particular).³⁸

The uniformity of the Isis Lactans figures points to the widespread popularity of a single prototype created in Alexandria. A considerable number of Isis Lactans statuettes have been found in the eastern Mediterranean, principally in northern Egypt, with slightly lower numbers discovered in the Levant, Cyprus, and Turkey.³⁹ Although there is clear evidence that the cult of Isis and Sarapis was popular throughout the Greco-Roman world, only a few Isis Lactans sculptures have been discovered in Greece and Italy. In Greece, a bronze statuette was found at Delphi,⁴⁰ and a second is in the National Archaeological Museum.⁴¹ Terracotta "Matrona with Child, Isis Type" figurines have been found in the Athenian Agora and date to the late 3rd to early 4th centuries.⁴² Because of the poor condition of the Agora statuette, detailed comparisons cannot be carried out; however, in body type, pose, and manner, the Agora bronze Isis Lactans compares well with Imperial statuettes from Alexandria and Cyprus and should be dated to the 2nd century A.D.⁴³

GROUP B (4-8)

In 1949, a group of five bronze statuettes (Figs. 2, 13-20) was discovered in a well (B 18:8) associated with a bath complex located in the southwest corner of the Agora (Figs. 11, 12).⁴⁴ Rodney S. Young dated the initial construction of the so-called East Bath to the late 2nd to early 3rd century A.D.⁴⁵ Judging from associated finds, the bronzes were deposited there at the time of the Herulian sack.⁴⁶ It is doubtful that they originated from the bath complex. As with Group A, the assemblage of deities represented suggests that the statuettes were part of a domestic shrine and likely originated from one of the Roman houses in the immediate vicinity.

As early as the 5th century B.C. this corner of the Agora, bordered by the slopes of the Areopagus, the Hill of the Nymphs, and the Kolonos

37. Tran Tam Tinh 1973, p. 35.

38. For the series of lamp handles decorated with Isis Lactans in relief, see Tran Tam Tinh 1973, pp. 79-101, nos. A-31-A-70.

39. Note the findspots of sculptures in Tran Tam Tinh 1973 (foldout map). Isis Lactans was also a popular image on the reverse of Roman coins minted at Alexandria from the time of Trajan

to Marcus Aurelius (Tran Tam Tinh 1973, pp. 108-141, nos. A-84-A-119).

40. Paris, Louvre Museum Br 192. *FdD* V.2, pp. 166-167, no. 204, pl. 59; Tran Tam Tinh 1973, p. 65, no. A-14, figs. 36, 37.

41. Athens, National Archaeological Museum 767 (findspot unknown). Tran Tam Tinh 1973, p. 63, no. A-11, fig. 33.

42. *Agora* VI, pp. 44-45, nos. 46, 47, pls. 3, 4.

43. See, in particular, Tran Tam Tinh 1973, pp. 56, 58-60, nos. A-4 (Nicosia, Cyprus), A-6-A-9 (Alexandria, Egypt).

44. Thompson 1950, pp. 332-333.

45. Young 1951, pp. 279-282.

46. Thompson 1950, p. 332.

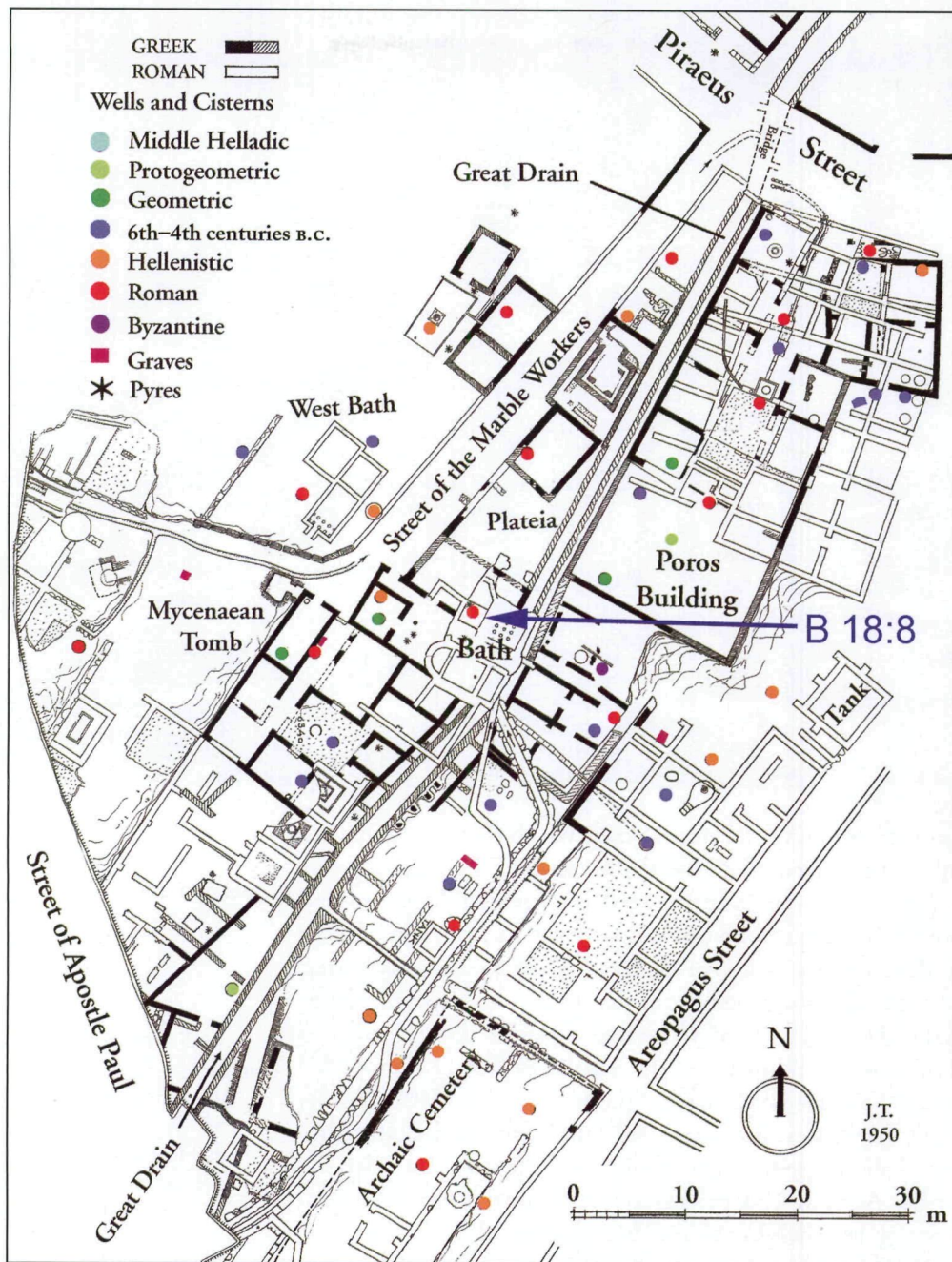


Figure 11. Detailed plan of the southwest corner of the Agora with the location of deposit B 18:8

Agoraios, was occupied by houses and small workshops (Fig. 12).⁴⁷ No doubt the inhabitants and workers took advantage of the proximity of the Agora to the northeast, which could be accessed via the street known today as the Street of the Marble Workers. Additionally, the area was especially well suited for commercial activities on account of the heavy traffic and

47. See esp. Young 1951, pp. 187–252. Workshop activity in the area is suggested by finds of marble chips and unfinished works (Young 1951, pp. 271–272). There is also evidence of clay production and the working of clay

(Thompson 1948, p. 173; 1949, p. 217). In addition to the discovery of a hearth and iron slag, bronzeworking activity in the 4th century B.C. may be attested by the discovery of a lead curse tablet (IL 997) in House D. Initially it was

interpreted as a curse directed toward two smiths (Thompson 1949, p. 217; Young 1951, pp. 222–223), but this interpretation has recently been challenged; see Curbera and Jordan 1998.



Figure 12. Remains of Greek and Roman houses in the southwest corner of the Agora

potential customers traveling on Piraeus Street, which runs approximately east–west linking the Piraeus Gate and the Acropolis.⁴⁸ This district continued to be sporadically occupied in the Hellenistic period. There are very few indications of Hellenistic houses, but deposits in wells and cisterns suggest some domestic occupation in the area.⁴⁹ Workshop activity during the Hellenistic period is suggested by the discovery of two casting pits in the vicinity: the “House H Foundry,” located along Areopagus Street to the south of the Poros Building under the remains of Roman House H,⁵⁰ and the “Keyhole Foundry” to the west of the Street of the Marble Workers.⁵¹ These casting pits were not part of permanent workshops, but rather temporary installations used for the production of bronzes intended for the Agora or the Acropolis.⁵² Coroplasts were also working in this area in the 2nd century B.C., judging by the discovery of debris consisting of terracotta molds and figurine fragments to the west of House N (the so-called Herakles Deposit)⁵³ and in the Koukla Factory fill.⁵⁴ Toward the end of the 1st century B.C. there is only scant evidence of domestic or commercial activity, a decline that traditionally has been attributed to the sack of Sulla in 86 B.C.⁵⁵

By the 1st century A.D., modest houses and workshops once again occupied the valley floor, while larger and more richly appointed houses were found on the more desirable slopes of the Areopagus and Hill of the Nymphs.⁵⁶ The more luxurious houses were ornamented with mosaic floors, wall decorations, and marble sculpture.⁵⁷ One such house (the so-called South House), located to the north of Piraeus Street and abutting the southern edge of the Kolonos Agoraios, provides a somewhat more detailed picture

48. See the map in Young 1951, p. 146, fig. 3.

49. Young 1951, p. 276.

50. Deposit C 19:3; Young (1951, p. 269) identifies the house as House O. The foundry has been dated to ca. 350–325 B.C. by Mattusch (1977, pp. 350–356).

51. Deposit A 16:1; dated to the second half of the 2nd century B.C. by Mattusch 1977, pp. 365–368.

52. Mattusch 1977, p. 377.

53. Deposit C 18:3; see Young 1951, p. 268. For the date of the deposit, see *Agora V*, p. 124.

54. Deposit C 20:2; for date of the deposit, see *Agora XXIX*, pt. 1, p. 440.

55. Thompson 1948, p. 169.

56. Thompson 1949, p. 217; 1957, pp. 100–101; Young 1951, pp. 272–279; *Agora XIV*, pp. 183–185.

57. *Agora XIV*, pp. 183–185.

of how such houses were decorated. Room 12 was decorated with a terrazzo floor and its remains hinted at a number of furnishings: fragments of glass and terracotta vessels, part of a bronze candelabrum, ivory decorative pieces, and three small bronze bases of a type commonly used to display bronze statuettes were found.⁵⁸ The partial preservation of furnishings from this room is mainly due to the heavy damage inflicted on the South House during the Herulian sack, a fate suffered by many other houses in the vicinity.⁵⁹

Given the proximity of these houses to the East Bath, and considering the luxurious fittings that must have decorated them, it is likely that the bronzes originated in one of these nearby houses. Furthermore, the deities represented by the bronzes—Tyche, Aphrodite, Eros, Harpokrates, and Telesphoros—lend further credence to the suggestion that they came from a domestic shrine. The statuettes may have been hidden in the well for safekeeping or, perhaps unintentionally, been thrown down afterward as part of a clean-up operation.

4 Tyche (Isis-Tyche?)

Figs. 13–15

B 880. Deposit B 18:8.

H. 0.141, with base 0.189 m.

Missing scepter(?) held in right hand and part of headdress inserted into the hole located just behind the diadem (Fig. 14). Right hand and left arm are both preserved, although currently detached.⁶⁰ Aside from a few rough areas, the surface is in good condition. The left arm was separately cast and attached by soldering (Fig. 15); remains of the solder are visible in the socket. Though separated when found, the statuette was originally attached to the base by soldering.

Thompson 1950, pp. 332–333, pl. 106:a; Sharpe 2002; 2006, pp. 176–178, no. 27.

The figure stands on her left leg with the right knee slightly bent and discernible through the heavy folds of her skirt. Her bent right arm is raised to the side and presumably held a scepter, while her left arm cradles a cornucopia filled with fruit and crowned with a crescent. She wears a heavy peplos, cinched in to create a *kolpos*, and the garment tends to hide rather than reveal the body underneath. The overfold in particular balloons up and swirls to the side as if blown by the wind or pulled aside by the weight of the cornucopia. A mantle, pulled up to partially cover the figure's head and shoulders, falls down her back to the level of her knees. Her hair is parted in the middle and loosely drawn back with much of it hidden beneath her veil. She wears a simple diadem, which once had a central ornament (now missing) inserted into the hole just behind the diadem (Fig. 14). Facial features are sharply defined and the pupils of the eyes are indicated by punched dots.

In the initial publication of the statuette, Homer Thompson identified the figure as an Eirene based on a comparison with the bronze statue group of Eirene and Ploutos by Kephisodotos that stood in the heart of the Agora.⁶¹ The Kephisodotos original has not survived, but Roman copies exist, the best known of which is in the Munich Glyptothek.⁶² The Agora bronze statuette echoes the Munich copy in general pose, dress, and body type. Both deities stand on the left leg with the right knee slightly bent and breaking through the heavy folds of drapery. Both wear a heavy peplos

58. Thompson 1957, pp. 100–101.

59. The discovery of three groups of coins, none of which date earlier than Valerian I (253–260) and no later than Gallienus (253–268), indicates that the South House was destroyed in the Herulian sack (Thompson 1957, p. 101).

60. The left arm is shown temporarily restored in Fig. 2.

61. Thompson 1950, pp. 332–333. Pausanias (1.8.2) saw this statue group on his tour of the Athenian Agora somewhere between the Monument of the Eponymous Heroes and the Temple of Ares.

62. Munich, Glyptothek 219; see LIMC III, 1986, p. 703, no. 8, pl. 541, s.v. Eirene (E. Simon).



Figure 13. Tyche (Isis-Tyche?) 4.
Scale 1:2



Figure 14 (*left*). Detail of head, Tyche (Isis-Tyche?) 4, from above. Scale 1:1

Figure 15 (*right*). Detail of separately cast left arm, Tyche (Isis-Tyche?) 4, holding a cornucopia. Note the grooves on the interior, which were meant to aid in soldering. Scale 1:1

cinched in to create a *kolpos*, and a mantle pinned at the shoulders falls down the back. Supplementing our knowledge of Kephisodotos's sculpture are a number of Panathenaic amphoras that depict the statue.⁶³ These vases illustrate further attributes of the statue, such as the wreath on her head and—as with the small bronze—a scepter held in her right hand.

While the resemblance to the Kephisodotos statue is obvious, the identification of the bronze statuette as Eirene is problematic. First, the change in appearance between the bronze statuette and Kephisodotos's Eirene is remarkable enough to suggest that we do not have a traditional representation of Eirene. Ploutos is absent, and therefore her gaze has shifted so that she now faces forward. The loose flowing locks of hair tumbling down onto the shoulders of the Munich copy are completely missing, and the headdress has been considerably altered. The figure now wears a diadem with her mantle pulled up to cover much of her hair, and the small hole, located just behind the diadem, indicates that the central ornament rose above her head. Eirene is never so elaborately represented.

63. The amphoras are inscribed with the name of the archon Kallimedes, thereby providing a date of 360/359 B.C. for their manufacture as well as supplying a terminus ante quem for the original bronze monument (Eschbach 1986, pp. 58–70, pls. 16–19).

If this figure's identity is to be sought elsewhere, there are a number of goddesses in the Greek and Roman pantheon who carry a cornucopia as an attribute, including the Roman version of Eirene (Pax), Tyche, and Roman Fortuna. Pax, principally worshipped in connection with the emperor and therefore more concerned with state than with private cult, is usually depicted holding a sheaf of wheat and a cornucopia or caduceus.⁶⁴ The Roman goddess Fortuna is almost always identifiable by another attribute, a rudder, which she holds by her side.⁶⁵ Occasionally she holds a caduceus rather than a cornucopia, and in her other hand a sheaf of wheat or a patera. Her standard costume is a chiton with a himation arranged diagonally across her chest or draped loosely across her hips and looped around her left forearm. Only rarely is she shown holding a scepter and dressed in a peplos.⁶⁶

In comparison with Roman Fortuna, the Greek goddess of fortune, Tyche, appears to have a much less standardized iconography. In addition to the seated pose of the well-known Tyche of Antioch type, the Greek goddess was often depicted in a pose very similar to that of Eirene. Pausanias comments on a Tyche and Ploutos group in Thebes made by the Athenian Xenophon, which he considers to be as clever as that of Kephisodotos—implying that the two statue groups were similar in design.⁶⁷ A 3rd-century relief from Melos, depicting Tyche with a scepter in her right hand and Ploutos cradled in her left, provides clearer evidence on how closely the two personifications could resemble one another in art.⁶⁸ This image was also minted on Melian coinage.⁶⁹ Another coin, from Elis, depicts on its reverse a standing Tyche with a scepter in her right hand and a cornucopia in her left.⁷⁰ In his travels around Elis, Pausanias (6.25.4) identifies a sanctuary of Tyche with a cult statue made of gilded wood, with the face, hands, and feet made of marble; presumably this is what the Elian coin depicts. Within Athens, Pausanias refers (1.43.6) to a statue of Tyche by Praxiteles near the Prytaneion; however, we have no information about its appearance. Nonetheless, it is clear that the statuette from the Athenian Agora bears a strong resemblance to representations of Tyche.

In Athens, it is not surprising that Tyche would assume certain characteristics belonging to Eirene, a deity that by the 4th century B.C. had gained special favor and was honored with her own cult in the Agora. The two were already associated by reason of their role as *kourotrophos*, or nurse, to Ploutos, implying that both could offer wealth and prosperity through their cult, and thus it is only natural that the two bear certain iconographical similarities. Additionally, an Attic inscription records that in 333/2 and 332/1 B.C. Eirene, Tyche, and Demokratia shared a cult and received offerings,⁷¹ which no doubt encouraged Athenians to connect more closely one with the other.

The elaborate headdress of the Agora statuette presents another conundrum. Eirene is depicted with her hair loosely pulled back from her face and falling to her shoulders. She likely wore a simple wreath. Tyche is typically shown wearing a polos or, to symbolize her role as protector of a city, a mural crown. The diadem and veil exhibited by the Agora statuette are in fact more reminiscent of Roman Fortuna;⁷² however, since the bronze statuette was found in the Greek East and the figure does not grasp a rudder, the prototypical attribute of Fortuna, the appellation of Tyche is more

64. *LIMC* VII, 1994, pp. 204–212, nos. 19–39, s.v. Pax (E. Simon).

65. For a review of Fortuna iconography, see Lichocka 1997.

66. Lichocka 1997, pp. 49–50: Fortuna wearing a peplos; pp. 246–247: Fortuna with cornucopia and scepter; *LIMC* VIII, p. 130, no. 64:a, pl. 96: Fortuna with cornucopia and scepter; p. 130, no. 66:c, pl. 97: Fortuna wearing a peplos, s.v. Tyche/Fortuna (F. Rausa).

67. Paus. 9.16.2; *Agora* III, p. 67, no. 159.

68. Traversari 1993, p. 10, fig. 22.

69. Traversari 1993, p. 10, fig. 23.

70. Franke 1984, p. 323, nos. 1, 2, 4, pls. 50, 52. Julia Domna appears on the obverse.

71. *IG* II² 1496, lines 107, 127, 131, 140–141; see Smith 1997, p. 169.

72. Lichocka 1997, figs. 330, 341, 350, 356, 366.

appropriate. Additionally, it should be noted that the change in headdress was perhaps inspired not by more standard images of Fortuna, but possibly by representations of Isis-Fortuna. Given the size and location of the hole just behind her diadem (Fig. 14), the most likely option for her crowning ornament is a *basileion*.⁷³ The fusion of Isis with deities such as Fortuna and Aphrodite is well known from the numerous sculptures, both large and small, discovered throughout the Roman world, but particularly in the eastern Mediterranean and Italy. Such elaborate combination headdresses are not uncommon, and provide further visual evidence of the syncretistic nature of Hellenistic and Roman religion.

As mentioned above, Tyche remained a popular figure throughout the Hellenistic and Roman periods. Eirene, on the other hand, never achieved such fame. What, then, could account for the revived interest in her cult in the Roman period, and what could have prompted a desire to reproduce her image in art? In Athens, there is evidence that her cult remained active until—or at least received renewed interest in—the last half of the 2nd century A.D. Under Hadrian, Athens began once again to mint a new bronze coinage, and sometime after ca. A.D. 140 a coin was issued bearing the head of Athena on the obverse and Kephisodotos's Eirene and Ploutos on the reverse.⁷⁴ As representations of wealth and prosperity, Eirene and Ploutos apparently were considered appropriate symbols for the prosperity of the Antonine age.⁷⁵ It was perhaps during this period, sometime in the second half of the 2nd century when the coins were in circulation, that the Tyche bronze statuette from the Agora was made.

5 Aphrodite

Fig. 16

B 881. Deposit B 18:8.

H. 0.178, with base 0.221 m.

Intact except for mirror once held in right hand. Surface corroded. Base preserved but similarly worn and corroded.

The goddess stands in a strong contrapposto with right leg bent and placed just in front of the left. The shift of her hips and the corresponding tilt of her shoulders, as well as the subtle twisting and turning of the body, lend the figure a certain dynamic quality. She leans back slightly, raising her left hand to grasp a lock of hair, while her right hand is extended before her to hold a now-missing mirror. A length of cloth wraps around her hips, passing just underneath the buttocks, and is knotted in front. She wears sandals with thin straps and thick soles. Her hair is rolled back from her face and falls loosely down her back, except for the lock of hair held up by her left hand. Though technically well executed, the figure is rather schematically rendered, with simple patterning of the drapery and hair.

Thompson 1950, pp. 332–333, pl. 106:a; Thompson and Frantz 1959, fig. 65; Camp 1980, p. 11, fig. 18; Sharpe 2006, pp. 181–182, no. 31.

This Agora statuette is immediately recognizable as a variant of the partially dressed Aphrodite Anadyomene type. Instead of having both her arms raised to fix her hair, the artist has chosen to depict the goddess at her toilette, with one arm raised to adjust her hair and the other outstretched to hold a mirror. This particular type does not appear to have been very common or widespread in the Greco-Roman world, and sculptural examples, when found, show such a degree of variation (in posture and dress) that any attempt to discern a prototype is fraught with difficulty.

73. For examples of small bronzes of Isis-Fortuna wearing a *basileion*, see *LIMC* V, 1990, p. 785, nos. 311:b, 311:t, pl. 521, s.v. Isis (V. Tran Tam Tinh).

74. *Agora* XXVI, p. 143, no. 267, pl. 18.

75. *Agora* XXVI, p. 125.



Figure 16. Aphrodite 5. Scale 1:2

Some of the earliest representations of Aphrodite holding a mirror are terracotta statuettes. A Tanagra figurine of the goddess wearing a himation wrapped around her hips, holding an apple in her right hand and a mirror in her upraised left hand, has been dated to the 3rd century B.C.⁷⁶ A partially preserved nude terracotta of Aphrodite, reportedly from Kyzikos, shows the goddess peering toward her open left hand held before her; she must have once held a round mirror.⁷⁷ It probably dates to the Hellenistic period, as should a similar bronze statuette in Berlin, said to be from Thera.⁷⁸ During the Imperial period, this type increased in popularity primarily in the eastern Mediterranean, as exemplified by a series of nude Isis-Aphrodite bronze statuettes perhaps made in Egypt or Syria.⁷⁹ The goddess is depicted nude, wearing jewelry and an elaborate diadem with both arms raised about chest height; she typically holds a mirror in one hand. Sculptural parallels to the Agora Aphrodite—showing the goddess holding a mirror and dressed with a himation wrapped around her hips—are uncommon. A bronze statuette of Imperial date found in Dalmatia, which depicts the goddess with one hand raised to her hair and the other holding a mirror, provides a close parallel for our statuette.⁸⁰

Overall, the subject of Aphrodite holding a mirror (both nude and partially draped) appears to have been much more common in the eastern Mediterranean. In addition to the nude Isis-Aphrodite bronzes mentioned above, terracotta statuettes of Aphrodite standing nude, save for a cloak draped over her right arm and wrapped around her lower limbs, depict the goddess holding a comb in one hand and a mirror in the other. Three examples are known, one of which comes from Mysia and is now in the Louvre Museum. The series has been dated to the 2nd century A.D. based on the similarity of the hairstyle to portraits of the empress Julia Domna.⁸¹

76. Furtwängler 1883, pl. 131. See also *LIMC* II, 1984, p. 78, no. 694, pl. 69, s.v. Aphrodite (A. Delivorrias, G. Berger-Doer, and A. Kossatz-Deissmann).

77. *LIMC* II, 1984, p. 60, no. 495, pl. 48, s.v. Aphrodite (A. Delivorrias, G. Berger-Doer, and A. Kossatz-Deissmann).

78. Neugebauer 1951, p. 47, no. 35, pl. 19. For similar bronze statuettes from the Roman period, see *LIMC* VIII, 1997, pp. 207–208, nos. 146, 165, pls. 142, 143, s.v. Venus (E. Schmidt).

79. Reeder-Williams 1979. Jentel (1981, p. 152) places their place of manufacture in Egypt.

80. Sacken 1871, p. 39, pl. 16:3.

81. *LIMC* VIII, 1997, p. 209, nos. 172–174, pl. 144, s.v. Venus (E. Schmidt).

Greek coins of the 2nd to 3rd century A.D. provide further parallels to the Agora Aphrodite. According to a study conducted by Max Bernhart, Aphrodite Anadyomene was a popular subject on coins minted primarily in western Anatolia.⁸² Furthermore, the reverse of a bronze coin minted at Antiocheia (Caria) during the reign of Gordian III (ruled 238–244) portrays Aphrodite in the same manner as the Agora Aphrodite statuette.⁸³ Roman empresses in particular were associated with Aphrodite/Venus, both on coins and in sculpture, beginning with Livia and continuing with her Julio-Claudian successors. During the 2nd century A.D., allusions to the goddess once again increased in popularity, and Antonine and Severan empresses were similarly portrayed in the guise of Aphrodite/Venus.⁸⁴ A marble portrait statue found in the forum at Praeneste of a woman in the guise of Aphrodite Anadyomene was originally thought to be a portrait of the empress Julia Soaemias, but has subsequently been deemed a private portrait.⁸⁵ The statue shows the woman partially dressed with a himation wrapped around her hips; her right arm is raised to her hair with her left arm outstretched holding an apple. According to Margarete Bieber, her left arm has been erroneously restored and should instead be shown raised to her hair in a traditional Anadyomene pose;⁸⁶ however, she might just as easily have held a mirror. Regardless of the position of the hands, there are strong stylistic similarities between the Agora bronze Aphrodite and the Praeneste statue. Both figures are tall and lean, with little inclination of the torso. The hairstyles of both are rather unpretentious, with the hair parted in the center and drawn back away from the face in loose waves.

While it is increasingly apparent that the Agora Aphrodite was likely made in the late 2nd or early 3rd century, its place of origin is a little more difficult to determine. Given the popularity of Aphrodite with a mirror in the eastern Mediterranean, it should not be a surprise that the Agora statuette shows stylistic similarities with Greek and eastern Greek sculptures. A bronze statuette of Aphrodite from Tortose, Syria, reveals the same tall, slender torso and rounded hips and wears a similar hairstyle.⁸⁷ A marble statuette of a nude Aphrodite Anadyomene in the Egyptian Museum, Cairo (provenience unknown), also compares well with the Agora bronze in the proportions of the body, the subtle torsion of the upper body, and the sharp tilt of the head.⁸⁸ A considerable number of Aphrodite marble statuettes have been found around the Acropolis that are not too far stylistically from the Agora bronze.⁸⁹ Based on these parallels, the Agora Aphrodite was likely made in the late 2nd or early 3rd century A.D. in Greece or elsewhere in the eastern Mediterranean (Syria, western Anatolia, or Alexandria).

82. For Aphrodite dressed solely in a himation wrapped around her hips, see Bernhart 1936, pp. 34–36, nos. 204–222, pls. V, VI.

83. Bernhart 1936, p. 33, no. 199, pl. V.

84. Mikocki 1995, p. 125.

85. Wrede 1981, pp. 314–315, no. 308, pl. 39:1.

86. Bieber 1977, p. 64, fig. 227, pl. 40.

87. *LIMC* II, 1984, p. 158, no. 86, pl. 162, s.v. Aphrodite (in *periphera orientali*) (M.-O. Jentel).

88. Cairo, Egyptian Museum, cat. gen. 27454. *LIMC* II, 1984, p. 156, no. 40, pl. 158, s.v. Aphrodite (in *periphera orientali*) (M.-O. Jentel).

89. Bieber 1977, p. 64, fig. 230, pl. 40. Terracotta statuettes of Aphrodite Anadyomene dated to the 3rd century have been found in the Agora (*Agora* VI, pp. 42–43, nos. 3, 7, pl. 1), as have numerous examples of marble statuettes of the goddess (A. Stewart, pers. comm.).



Figure 17. Eros 6. Scale 2:3

6 Eros

Fig. 17

B 882. Deposit B 18:8.

H. 0.116 m.

Surface badly corroded. Missing object from left hand and toes from both feet. Cracks extend up either side of the torso, particularly noticeable on the right side. Hole visible on the back by right wing. Hollow cast. Use of copper inlay to define nipples.

Thompson 1950, pp. 332–333, pl. 106:a; Sharpe 2006, pp. 180–181, no. 30.

Eros stands in a slight contrapposto pose, with the right hip thrust out and the left leg slightly advanced. He poses somewhat stiffly with his left arm forward and his hand lightly clenched to hold a now-missing object, perhaps a bow. In his right hand he holds a *lagobolon* (hunting stick), which twines up his arm, over his shoulder, and around the back of his head. Two small wings protrude from his upper back. He has an oval-shaped face but the facial features are difficult to clearly distinguish due to corrosion. Small curls frame his face, and a braid runs from his forehead back toward the crown of his head. His stocky body is somewhat ill-proportioned, with short stubby legs and a rather barrel-shaped torso.

In his preliminary report on the bronze statuettes from the Agora, Thompson assigned the Eros figure a date of manufacture in the 1st century A.D.⁹⁰ There are indeed similarities between the Eros bronze and Late Hellenistic/Early Roman representations of the god, especially terracotta statuettes of Eros from Myrina.⁹¹ In general, they share similarly proportioned body types and the same subtle contrapposto stance. Depictions of Eros could vary widely throughout Greek and Roman history, but Early Imperial sculptures of Eros tended to depict the young god either as a plump and fleshy toddler or as a slender adolescent. In the 2nd and 3rd centuries there apparently was a return to the more solidly built and stiffly posed figure of Eros. It was at this time that Eros/Cupid became a popular subject

90. Thompson 1950, p. 332.

91. *LIMC* III, 1986, pp. 859, 876, 912, nos. 41:a, 292, 729:a, s.v. Eros (A. Hermay, H. Cassimatis, and R. Vollkommer).

on Roman sarcophagi. The style of the Agora Eros compares well with the Eros/Cupid figures found on 2nd- and early-3rd-century sarcophagi, which also provide strong parallels for Eros holding a *lagobolon*.⁹² There are only a few Greek examples of Eros portrayed with a hunting stick; the theme is much more common on Roman sarcophagi depicting a Bacchic *thiasos*. When Eros is portrayed alongside members of Bacchus's *thiasos*, who commonly engage in hunting, it does not appear unusual for him to carry a *lagobolon* as well.⁹³

7 Harpokrates

Figs. 18, 19

B 883. Deposit B 18:8.

H. 0.89 m.

Front of right foot missing; otherwise in very good condition. Right arm cast separately (Fig. 19). Bottom of feet lightly scored with parallel grooves to aid in soldering. Eyes inlaid with silver.

Thompson 1950, pp. 332–333, pl. 106:a; Thompson and Frantz 1959, fig. 63; *LIMC* IV, 1988, p. 419, no. 27, pl. 243, s.v. Harpokrates (V. Tran Tam Tinh, B. Jaeger, and S. Poulin); Sharpe 2006, pp. 179–180, no. 29.

The small god stands with his right foot slightly forward and his weight evenly distributed. He is nude except for a small animal skin (*nebris*) draped diagonally across his body and tied over his left shoulder. A cornucopia is cradled in his left arm and he raises his right hand, fingers held together, to his mouth in a characteristic gesture. He has a full, rounded face and large eyes; these are highlighted with silver, and the pupils are indicated by punch marks. Curls frame his face, with the hair on the top of his head pulled back in a loose braid that lies back along the central axis of his head. His body is especially well modeled, capturing the soft plumpness of a child, and much care has been taken in rendering the face, hair, and cornucopia.

Numerous small-scale bronzes of Harpokrates have survived and have been found throughout the Roman Empire. Sculptures of Harpokrates portrayed in a Greco-Roman style are primarily Roman in date, and bronze statuettes of the god show little variation.⁹⁴ He is regularly shown standing contrapposto, nude, right hand raised to his mouth and left hand holding a cornucopia. Subtle variations exist in regard to dress (wearing a *nebris* or cloak draped over his shoulder), jewelry, and crown. A popular prototype was likely created in Alexandria and, like the Isis Lactans type discussed above, must have spread throughout the Roman Empire in conjunction with the Sarapis-Isis cult. Coins minted in Alexandria depicting the young god were made during the reigns of Domitian, Hadrian, and Antoninus Pius and appear to portray the popular cult statue.⁹⁵

In a manner similar to other Harpokrates statues, the Agora figure is nude save for an animal (fawn?) skin draped across his chest and tied over his left shoulder. Otherwise the child-god is unadorned without his usual miniature Egyptian crown and jewelry. Rather, the statuette exhibits a rich interplay of texture and color: the rough animal skin and the braided and curly hair contrast with the smooth glossy skin, and the eyes inlaid with silver with the bronze color of the face. Also remarkable is the rigid upright stance of the Agora statuette. Typically, Harpokrates is rendered in an extremely languid fashion, with one hip outthrust displaying a strong

92. See, in particular, a sarcophagus in the Palazzo Mattei in Rome dated to ca. 160 (Huskinson 1996, p. 50, no. 6:36, pl. XI:2).

93. *LIMC* III, 1986, p. 1023, no. 584, s.v. Eros/Amor, Cupido (N. Blanc and F. Gury). For Roman sarcophagi, see Kranz 1999, nos. 60, 71, 76, 121, and 123.

94. *LIMC* IV, 1988, p. 416, s.v. Harpokrates (V. Tran Tam Tinh, B. Jaeger, and S. Poulin).

95. *LIMC* IV, 1988, p. 420, no. 34, pl. 243, s.v. Harpokrates (V. Tran Tam Tinh, B. Jaeger, and S. Poulin).



Figure 18. Harpokrates 7. Scale 1:1



Figure 19. Harpokrates 7, showing separately cast right arm. Scale 1:1

96. *LIMC* IV, 1988, p. 420, no. 39:a, pl. 243, s.v. Harpokrates (V. Tran Tam Tinh, B. Jaeger, and S. Poulin).

97. *LIMC* III, 1986, pp. 917, 930, nos. 791, 972, pls. 654, 663, s.v. Eros (A. Hermay).

torsion in the torso. The stiff frontal pose of the Agora figure may be an attempt at rendering the figure in a more classicizing manner comparable to that of a marble statue of Harpokrates from Hadrian's Villa at Tivoli.⁹⁶ Equally curious is the heavy, rounded modeling of the face and body. Although not often exhibited by other Harpokrates statuettes, this taste for soft, rounded forms is noticeable among depictions of Eros. This stylistic trend is particularly evident in 2nd-century A.D. sculpture from Greece, as demonstrated by two works from Thessaloniki: a marble statue of Eros and a marble sarcophagus adorned with Erotes.⁹⁷ Thus the Agora Harpokrates may date to the 2nd century A.D.



Figure 20. Telesphoros 8. Scale 1:1

8 Telesphoros

Fig. 20

B 884. Deposit B 18:8.

H. 0.67 m (with base, 0.83 m).

Intact, including base. Some corrosion visible particularly on the back, right shoulder, and hood of the cloak. The molded base is circular in shape with a convex rim and foot and concave middle. Considering the small size, it is most likely solid cast.

Thompson 1950, pp. 332–333, pl. 106:a; *LIMC* VII, 1994, p. 872, no. 22, pl. 602, s.v. Telesphoros (H. Rühfel).

The youthful god stands frontally with feet together. He wears a shepherd's cloak that falls just below his knees and covers most of his pudgy body. The hood is drawn up and the edges are pulled together at chest level. His arms, held at his side, are faintly visible beneath his cloak. His round, childish face has an animated expression and is framed on either side by short curls. Although somewhat cursorily modeled, the bronze shows fine attention to detail and has a particularly lively quality.

The cult of Telesphoros was a late addition to the Greek pantheon and is first documented at Pergamon.⁹⁸ The earliest evidence of his cult comes from an inscription dated to A.D. 101/2, which records the dedication of a statue to Telesphoros.⁹⁹ Shortly thereafter, the god makes his earliest appearance on Pergamene coins minted during the reign of Hadrian; the god is clearly recognizable by his enveloping cloak and peaked hood pulled up over his head.¹⁰⁰ There is very little variation in depictions of Telesphoros, which perhaps indicates the key role played by Pergamon in the dissemination of his cult. Pergamene coins of the 2nd century, issued under Antoninus Pius, reveal the same image of the god, but it is now shown in an *aedicula*, suggesting that we have in fact an image of the cult statue in its shrine as it appeared in the Asklepieion.¹⁰¹ Sculptural representations of the god have not yet been discovered at Pergamon.¹⁰²

98. Wroth 1882, p. 285.

99. Ohlemutz 1968, pp. 160–161.

100. *LIMC* VII, 1994, p. 872, no. 24, pl. 602, s.v. Telesphoros (H. Rühfel).

101. Wroth 1882, p. 288; Ohlemutz 1968, pp. 162–163. For the coin, see *LIMC* VII, 1994, p. 872, no. 26, pl. 603, s.v. Telesphoros (H. Rühfel).

102. *LIMC* VII, 1994, p. 878, s.v. Telesphoros (H. Rühfel).

From Pergamon, the cult of Telesphoros spread to other cities in western Anatolia and is in evidence in Athens by at least the late 2nd century. Telesphoros first appears on Athenian coinage as early as the mid to late 2nd century.¹⁰³ Epigraphic evidence consists of theophoric names on ephebic inscriptions dating as early as A.D. 194/5¹⁰⁴ and dedicatory inscriptions from the late 2nd to 3rd century.¹⁰⁵ Additionally, there is considerable material evidence to support the existence of a local cult of Telesphoros, in the form of terracotta lamps, lead tokens, and marble and bronze statuettes.¹⁰⁶ The god is depicted in the same manner without too much variation: standing, feet together, wearing a cloak with hood pulled over the head. The Agora bronze is one of the best preserved and most finely crafted of the extant examples and, as much as one can compare a bronze statuette to an image on a coin, compares very well with the cult statue depicted on the Pergamene coins. The bronze statuette appears to be a copy of the cult statue in Pergamon and may date to the late 2nd or early 3rd century A.D.

HISTORICAL AND RELIGIOUS CONTEXTS

It is clear that, based on archaeological evidence in the Agora, the attack by the Herulians in A.D. 267/8 had a devastating effect on the inhabitants living in and around the Athenian Agora.¹⁰⁷ Finds from wells and cisterns, consisting of architectural, sculptural, and pottery debris, as well as skeletons of the victims, attest to the damage. The deposition of two caches of bronze figurines in wells in the Agora at the time of the Herulian sack may be explained in one of two ways: either the bronzes were deposited there by the owners for safekeeping and were never retrieved, or the statuettes were swept up with other debris and dumped in a convenient well. The fact that the statuettes of Group A (1–3) were discovered without their bases speaks for simple disposal of the bronzes rather than careful securing of valuable objects.

Although the Agora bronzes were not found in domestic contexts, it may be confidently stated that both groups did in fact come from houses. The southeastern corner of the Agora, including the slopes of the Areopagus, the Hill of the Nymphs, the Kolonos Agoraios, and the small valley where these hills meet, was a popular residential and commercial quarter in the Classical period. It is easy to imagine that after the Herulian sack, Athenian residents returned to the site and cleared out the debris to make way for new construction. The nearby wells were an easy and convenient dump for trash, wreckage, and the occasional corpse.

The small size, material (bronze), and subject matter (Greek and Roman deities) of the Agora bronzes are in keeping with *lararia* figurines

103. *Agora* XXVI, p. 121, n. 42; pp. 136, 139, nos. 218, 242.

104. *IG* II² 2127, lines 6, 10; *IG* II² 2227, line 3; see *Agora* V, p. 52, n. 9.

105. *IG* II² 4533, 4541; see *Agora* V, p. 52, n. 9; *IG* II² 4531; see Dow 1982.

106. Terracotta lamps: *Agora* VI, p. 75, nos. 943–958, pl. 27. Lead tokens:

Agora X, p. 117, no. L 300:a–i, pl. 29. Marble sculpture: Martha 1880, pp. 31–32, nos. 147, 148; Sybel 1881, pp. 141, 318, nos. 1106, 4479 (statuettes of Aphrodite with Telesphoros); Koerte 1896, pp. 292–293, no. 9; Touchais 1984, pp. 740, 743, fig. 15; *LIMC* VII, 1994, pp. 872, 873, nos. 15, 42,

s.v. Telesphoros (H. Rüfel). In addition to the bronze statuette discussed here, a second bronze statuette of Telesphoros was found in the Agora (B 384; Thompson 1950, p. 333, n. 36).

107. For an overview of the destruction of the city, see Wilson 1971, pp. 90–110.

found elsewhere in the Roman Empire. Overall, evidence of so-called *lararia* figurines from Greece and Asia Minor is scarce, particularly in comparison with finds from the Roman West.¹⁰⁸ As mentioned above, aside from the Athenian Agora examples, there are only a few notable finds of bronze statuettes from Roman Greece that have been identified as once belonging to a domestic shrine. These include the so-called Paramythia bronzes discovered in northwest Greece in 1791–1792,¹⁰⁹ a hoard of bronzes found in Ambelokipi (Athens) in 1964,¹¹⁰ and two groups of bronzes found on Kos, one at the Casa dei Bronzi¹¹¹ and the other in the Damsa district.¹¹² A shipwreck at Agia Galini off the coast of Crete yielded a group of bronze statuettes that may have originally formed the contents of a household shrine.¹¹³ Additionally, two groups of bronze statuettes are known from Asia Minor: three statuettes were discovered in the peristyle court of House 2, Terrace House 2 at Ephesos,¹¹⁴ and another three in a disturbed context at Peristyle House II at Pergamon.¹¹⁵ Of particular interest is a group of sculptures discovered in the Theodosian Palace in Stobi (FYROM). The finds consist of marble and bronze statuettes and reliefs that were deposited in one of the ornamental basins located in the peristyle.¹¹⁶ Four of the smaller bronze sculptures—a *lar*, Apollo, Venus, and a satyr—may have formed the contents of a *lararium*.¹¹⁷ The palace was in use until the 5th century A.D., but the sculpture consists

108. Kaufmann-Heinimann (1998) provides an extensive catalogue of Roman bronze statuettes discovered in domestic contexts from across the Roman Empire.

109. Swaddling (1979, p. 103) notes that the bronzes were found not at Paramythia, but a few kilometers away in the village of Labovo. She deduces that at least 20 bronzes were discovered in 1791–1792, after which they were sold to various dealers and collectors. Six (representing Jupiter, Juno, a bearded faun, Cupid, a Hekataion, and Hercules) were sold to Count Golowkin, but their current location is unknown. Eventually, 14 of the bronzes ended up in the collection of the British Museum, the majority of which Walters published in the *British Museum Catalogue of Bronzes* (1899, nos. 272–281, 1446). These statuettes depict Apollo, Poseidon, Zeus, Sarapis, Castor(?), a *lar*, Dione or Aphrodite, and Aphrodite.

110. Stavropoulos 1965, pp. 103–107, pls. 58–71; Daux 1968, pp. 741–748. A complete publication of the finds has yet to appear, but a preliminary report was presented by Pepi Krystalli-Votsi at the 12th International

Congress on Ancient Bronzes (Krystalli-Votsi 1995). Judging from the variety of bronzes found, in terms of size and iconography, the Ambelokipi statuettes likely consist of religious as well as decorative bronzes.

111. In the excavation report, Luigi Morricone (1950, pp. 318–319) mentions only three statuettes: Mars, Isis-Aphrodite, and Isis-Demeter (more likely Isis-Fortuna). Three additional bronzes are known from the house: a bronze bust of Geta (Morricone 1979–1980); a statuette of Isis (Bosnakis 1994–1995, pp. 60–63, pl. 10:a); and a Hermes (Sirano 2004, p. 968). Kaufmann-Heinimann (1998, p. 309, no. GF 114, fig. 275) identifies a total of seven bronzes from the site: Mars, Asklepios, Minerva, Venus-Isis, Isis-Fortuna, Isis, and the bronze bust representing either Caracalla or Geta. Based on coins of Gallienus found during the excavation, the bronzes have a terminus ante quem of the mid-3rd century A.D. (Morricone 1950, p. 319).

112. Kantzia 1987, p. 640; Dontas 1989, p. 55; Kaufmann-Heinimann 1998, p. 309, no. GF 115, fig. 276. The bronzes found include a Tyche-Isis, a running Artemis, an Asklepios, and a

bronze bust of Caligula; they were discovered in a mid-3rd-century context (Dontas 1989, p. 55).

113. Kaufmann-Heinimann 1998, p. 305, fig. 272. The bronzes consist of Mars, seated Mercury, Eros, Aphrodite, Victoria, and a bust of Ceres-Isis. The shipwreck dates to ca. 276–282.

114. *Ephesos* VIII.8, vol. 2, pp. 605–606, 633–634, nos. B-B 83–85. The bronzes depict Athena, Isis Panthea, and Sarapis and were discovered in the northwest corner of the peristyle along with an altar. Stylistically, they range in date from the 1st century to the first half of the 3rd century; however, their find context dates to the third quarter of the 3rd century.

115. Pinkwart 1972; Pinkwart and Stammnitz 1984, p. 162. The bronzes represent Mars, Herakles, and a satyr. They were discovered lying 10 cm above the last occupation level of the house, which dates to the second half of the 3rd century A.D. They may not have originated from Peristyle House II but may have fallen from a location farther up the hill.

116. Stirling 2005, pp. 197–198 (with earlier bibliography).

117. Stirling 2005, p. 197.

of heirloom and/or reused pieces that may date as early as the 2nd to 1st century B.C.¹¹⁸ An unusual feature of the bronze assemblages mentioned above is the fact that they date overwhelmingly to the 3rd century A.D. and later. We therefore have a very narrow view of the use and appearances of bronze statuettes from domestic contexts in Roman Greece.

Of the groups listed above, three of the deposits contain *lar* figures: Athenian Agora Group A, the Paramythia hoard, and the Theodosian Palace collection. Given the presence of *lar* statuettes, classifying these three assemblages as the contents of *lararia* is relatively straightforward. Yet, given the lack of *lar* figures from other Greek deposits, can we still broadly define all statuettes from domestic contexts in Roman Greece (and those from the eastern Roman provinces, for that matter) as "*lararia* figurines"? Furthermore, can we automatically assume that the owners of the statuettes were ethnically Roman? In order to answer these questions, it is first worthwhile to examine Greek and Roman domestic cult practices and the role played by representational images in both.

GREEK DOMESTIC RELIGIOUS PRACTICES

Our knowledge of Greek domestic religion has been gleaned from literary, epigraphical, and archaeological sources, and while a general picture of household religion has emerged, our understanding of the intricacies of religious practices and the varieties that must have existed is far from complete.¹¹⁹ Even a cursory examination of the evidence indicates that we should be talking of Greek domestic *cults* rather than a single and universal domestic *cult*. In their studies of this subject, Martin Nilsson and Herbert Rose have documented the range of deities worshipped in the Greek household and, to a degree, the manner in which they were honored.¹²⁰ Yet one is left with the overall impression, particularly from Nilsson, that alongside the veneration of Hermes, Hestia, and various aspects of Zeus, there was a considerable variety of deities and heroes honored in Greek households—often including local divinities.¹²¹ Lastly, it is worth emphasizing that the deities mentioned in literary and epigraphical evidence (e.g., inscribed altars) do not always coincide with those represented in sculptural form in 4th-century and Hellenistic domestic contexts.

Literary evidence on private religious practices in the Greek world is scant, both because such activities were conducted in private and because they were most likely considered rather commonplace. Information on sculpture serving domestic religious needs in Greek houses is even more

118. Stirling 2005, p. 198. In addition to the four bronze statuettes, finds include a large bronze statuette of a satyr, marble sculptures of Aphrodite, Dionysos, Hygieia, Pan and the Nymphs, a head of Sarapis, an idealized female head, and two marble reliefs depicting Cybele.

119. For new research on Greek household religion, particularly on gen-

der roles, *oikos* and *genos* religion, and the interrelationship of family and civic religion, see Boedeker 2008; Faraone 2008.

120. Nilsson 1940, pp. 65–79; 1954; 1974, pp. 175–207; Rose 1957. For the worship of Zeus, see Sjövall 1931; Jaillard 2004. Harward (1982, pp. 80–101) has summarized the literary and archaeological evidence for Greek

sculpture serving religious needs in the 5th and 4th centuries B.C. More recently, Person (2012) has examined the household cults of Roman Achaia and provides an extensive review of Greek and Roman household cult practices.

121. See also Kunze 1996, pp. 111–114; Morgan 2010, pp. 143–165.

exiguous, and when mentioned it is typically of secondary interest. For example, it is primarily through Thucydides (6.27) that we learn of the placement of herm statues in front of Classical Athenian houses, though he is more concerned with relating the incident that resulted in their vandalism in 415 B.C. than with their specific domestic religious role. The anecdotes in the *Deipnosophists* of Athenaeus, who was active ca. A.D. 200, provide us with tantalizing glimpses into 4th-century and Hellenistic private life, including additional information on herm statues and statuettes. One is the well-known story of Xenocrates, who, after winning a golden crown at a drinking party of Dionysius of Syracuse, places it on a herm statue situated in front of his courtyard (Ath. 10.437b, citing Timaeus). These statues, when placed at doorways and in house courtyards, not only served to demarcate private property but also provided protection to the household.¹²² Athenaeus (11.460e) also recounts a passage from Euboulos regarding a stone image (statuette?) of Maia's son Hermes in a sideboard. According to Birgit Rückert, in contrast to herms set up in front of houses (Hermes Propylaios or Strophaios), herm statues and statuettes within a house functioned as cult images possibly connected with the cult of Aphrodite.¹²³ This connection is supported by Theophrastos (*Char.* 16.7–10), who comments on the actions of an overly pious or superstitious man. In addition to purifying his house to pacify Hekate, on the fourth and seventh day of the month he buys myrtle boughs and frankincense and makes sacrifice to Hermaphrodites.¹²⁴ Rose, in his discussion of the passage, assumes that the Hermaphrodite was a double herm with the two deities portrayed back to back;¹²⁵ however, pairs of small lead herms depicting both a male and female deity side by side on a single base have been found at Olynthus, and Theophrastos may have been referring to this kind of arrangement.¹²⁶

Archaeological evidence verifies the presence of herms in 4th-century and Hellenistic Greek houses. Some of the earliest examples are from Olynthus. These include the small lead herms and a marble head from the court of House A VI, identified by Evelyn Harrison as coming from a herm of the god Apollo.¹²⁷ Perhaps the best-known example is the fragmentary 4th-century B.C. marble herm from the courtyard of House II at Eretria.¹²⁸ By the Hellenistic period, herms of varying size and media could be found in Greek houses—rarely at the entrances, but more often in the courtyard, in the peristyle, or within the house itself.¹²⁹ On the island of Delos, numerous herm statues, representing not only Hermes and Dionysos but also Herakles, Priapos, Harpokrates, and Eros, were discovered in houses.¹³⁰

122. For specific information on the purpose of herms in Greek households, see Wrede 1985, pp. 49–50; Rückert 1998, pp. 176–184. A 1st-century B.C. grave stele from Erythrai suggests how these herm statues may have been set up: it depicts a man standing before a set of doors and to the left of the entrance is an archaistic herm on a pedestal (Ridgway 2002, pl. 97).

123. Rückert 1998, pp. 182–184.

124. For discussions of the passage,

see Rose 1957, pp. 108–109; Harward 1982, pp. 84–88.

125. Rose 1957, pp. 108–109.

126. *Olynthus* X, pp. 6–14, pls. II, III; Harward 1982, pp. 84–88.

127. *Agora* XI, pp. 128–129, 161. For the original publication, see *Olynthus* II, pp. 74–78, figs. 195–197; *Olynthus* VIII, p. 76.

128. Only the head, shoulder, torso, and base are preserved; the base was found in situ in the peristyle at

the entrance of a large room (room *i*), which preceded a suite of rooms consisting of two *androns*: *Eretria* X, pp. 97–98, figs. 153, 154. Gard (1974) dates the herm to the late 4th century B.C. Ceramic evidence dates the construction of House II to the late 5th–early 4th century B.C. (*Eretria* X, pp. 111–112).

129. Rückert 1998, pp. 182–184.

130. Kreeb 1984, pp. 337–339; 1988, pp. 59–60.

Aside from the marble head found in the court of Olynthus House A VI, there is little concrete evidence of herm statues located at house entryways. Alternatively, smaller sculptural works made in bronze, lead, wood, or terracotta could have been displayed in wall niches at house entrances. Numerous terracotta herm statuettes have been found in various dumps and fills from the Athenian Agora, and it is likely that at least some of them originally came from houses.¹³¹

Another household deity mentioned in 5th- and 4th-century literature is Hekate. Rose indicates that in Classical times Hekate was viewed more as a "witches' goddess," and although she was considered a household deity, shrines to her were commonly placed outside the house, preferably at the nearest crossroads.¹³² This attitude is echoed in Theophrastos's story (*Char.* 16.7) of the overly pious man who is "apt to purify his house frequently claiming Hekate has bewitched it."¹³³ The desire to keep the goddess at a distance is also reflected in a passage from *The Wasps* by Aristophanes (lines 799–804), which mentions that shrines dedicated to Hekate are located at doorways. Neither one of these sources mentions a statue of the goddess; a simple aniconic shrine may have served just as well. Statues and statuettes could have been on display in Classical Greek houses, although this appears to have been rare. Porphyry (*Abst.* 2.16) preserves a passage by Theopompos concerning the pious nature of Klearchos of Arcadia, who offers wreaths and adorns Hermes and Hekate statues in his house. From Delos, only a few Hekate statues are known, one from the Establishment of the Poseidonists¹³⁴ and a fragmentary example from the Rue du Théâtre; however, neither was found in or in front of a traditional *oikos*.¹³⁵ Martin Kreeb identifies a base preserved in a wall niche in House VI D in the Theatre district as once having held a three-bodied Hekate statuette, to judge by the shape of its cutting.¹³⁶ Small statues of the goddess are known from elsewhere in the Greek world and would have been eminently suitable for private display.¹³⁷

Two other deities traditionally associated with Greek household religion are Hestia and Zeus. Yet unlike Hermes and, to a lesser degree, Hekate, Hestia and the various aspects of Zeus worshipped in Greek houses were rarely if ever depicted in human form. Hestia was associated with the hearth, and this was the focal point of her cult. The offerings of food and drink that she received at family meals and during feasts seem to have been rather

131. Some of the terracotta herms include T 572, T 850, T 877, T 902, T 916, T 1006, T 1664, T 1666, T 2338, and T 3079. Herm figures were also rendered in relief; a small herm figure is still visible on the stone doorjamb of Shop III of the Stoa of Attalos in the Athenian Agora (*Agora* XI, p. 174, no. 234, pl. 61; see also pp. 174–176, nos. 235, 236, 238–242, for additional examples).

132. Rose 1957, p. 104.

133. Trans. J. S. Rusten, I. C. Cunningham, and A. D. Knox, Cambridge, Mass., 1993. By contrast, it is intriguing

to note that Euripides' Medea, a priestess of Hekate, refers to the goddess as dwelling near the hearth (*Eur. Med.* 396).

134. Harward 1982, pp. 128–129, site catalogue 21; Kreeb 1988, p. 66, site catalogue S 1.19.

135. Harward 1982, pp. 128–129, site catalogue 56.2.

136. Kreeb 1984, pp. 328–329, figs. 12, 13; 1988, p. 66.

137. Alexandria: Alexander 1939 (wooden Hekate statuette); Athens: *Agora* XI, pp. 86–107.

generic and conducted with little fanfare.¹³⁸ Zeus was worshipped in various guises, the two most common being Zeus Herkeios and Zeus Ktesios, and he served as protector of the house and storerooms.¹³⁹ Zeus (like his sons the Dioskouroi) typically was not given human form but was associated with the household snake, which traditionally served as the household guardian. The fusion of these two protective figures, Zeus and the snake, is illustrated in a passage by Antikleides, preserved by Athenaeus (11.473b–c), who describes the appropriate manner to honor Zeus Ktesios: set up a vessel, adorn it with cloth and white wool, and fill it with ambrosia (water, oil, and fruits of the earth),¹⁴⁰ an offering intended and especially appropriate for the household snake.¹⁴¹ Zeus Herkeios is also mentioned by Aristotle ([*Ath. Pol.*] 55.3), who inquires of a citizen whether he has a Zeus Herkeios and an Apollo Patroos, and where their shrines are situated.¹⁴²

Aristotle's comment on shrines raises another question: whether or not Greeks had fixed shrines and altars similar to Roman *lararia*. At Olynthus, numerous small altars were found both in the courtyard and in the house, and they must have been a common feature in Classical and 4th-century B.C. Greek houses.¹⁴³ Freestanding and small in size, these portable altars (*arulae*) could easily have been moved to different areas of the house and courtyard for various religious needs. Inscribed house altars that have been discovered at Priene, Thera, and Miletos let us know which deities were honored by the household inhabitants;¹⁴⁴ chief among them are Hestia, Tyche, Agathos Daimon, Hygieia, and Zeus (Ktesios, Kataibates, and Soter).¹⁴⁵ At Miletos, a number of local and foreign gods were included, such as Zeus Labrandeus, Harpokrates, and Helios Sarapis.¹⁴⁶

On Delos, freestanding altars of marble were found in the courtyards and hallways of a number of houses, some inscribed with names of deities, including Pan and the Nymphs, Sarapis, Isis, Anubis, Apollo, Artemis, Aphrodite, and the Dioskouroi.¹⁴⁷ More numerous are the fixed domestic altars found either in the courtyard or peristyle or, in more elaborate houses, abutting an exterior wall of the house just outside the doorway.¹⁴⁸ Many were stuccoed and painted with scenes of sacrifice and sporting events, and the adjoining wall was often painted with similar scenes, as well as with depictions of Herakles and Hermes.¹⁴⁹ In his 1926 publication of these altars and painted walls, Marcel Bulard proposed that the altars and paintings should be associated with the domestic religious practices of the Roman

138. Nilsson 1954, pp. 77–79; Rose 1957, pp. 104–105.

139. Sjövall 1931; Nilsson 1954, p. 79; Rose 1957, pp. 98–103.

140. For a discussion of this passage, see Rose 1957, pp. 100–102.

141. Nilsson 1954, p. 79. Snakes can be drawn to water, and it is probably for this reason that Geometric and Orientalizing amphoras were often decorated with plastic snake figures winding around the vessels.

142. Aristophanes, in the *Wasps* (875–876), mentions a “sidewalk

Apollo” situated at the entrance of a house, but sculpted representations of Apollo are largely unknown from domestic contexts. Instead, his presence may have been alluded to by a bay tree or bay leaves (Faraone 2008, p. 228, n. 38; Morgan 2010, p. 151).

143. *Olynthus* VIII, pp. 322–325. Yavis (1949, pp. 175–176) briefly discusses house altars in his publication on Greek altars.

144. Nilsson 1954, p. 80; 1974, pp. 177–178. Nilsson identifies many of the altars as belonging to the Hel-

lenistic age, but admits that others must be Roman. See also *Thera* III, pp. 154, 166–174.

145. For a more comprehensive list, see Nilsson 1974, pp. 177–178.

146. Nilsson 1954, p. 80.

147. Bruneau 1970, pp. 640–641.

148. Bulard 1926, p. 7.

149. Less popular subjects include Liber, Ceres, Libera, Sol, and Silvanus. For a complete list and discussion, see Bulard 1926; Bruneau 1970, pp. 589–615.

residents of the island.¹⁵⁰ Philippe Bruneau, however, has demonstrated that these altars and liturgical paintings pertain to the Roman cult of the Lares Compitales.¹⁵¹ They were erected by *Compitaliastai*, freedmen and slaves of Greek and eastern origin who served Roman patrons.¹⁵² Bruneau has determined that many of these scenes and figures, although created in honor of a Roman festival, have Greek antecedents, and that the altars, paintings, and associated rituals were a result of a mingling of Greek and Roman traditions.

Additionally, there is scant evidence for the presence of fixed household shrines in the Classical period. There were undoubtedly regional variations in domestic religious practices, as suggested by the discovery of a number of small, predominantly freestanding, shrines in Corinth. According to Charles K. Williams II, the 5th–4th-century stelai shrines were erected over the remains of demolished houses and were constructed to commemorate the family gods and heroes that were once worshipped there.¹⁵³ Williams also identifies a cult room in the Terracotta Factory at Corinth (which may also have served as a residence) outfitted with an offering table, a triglyph altar, and possibly two cult statue bases.¹⁵⁴ Such fixed shrines and cult rooms, however, appear to have been rare.

Sculptures that served household religious needs were frequently found throughout the house. As noted above, herm statues, although commonly assigned to locations outside entryways or in the peristyle, were apparently found indoors as well. The marble statue of Asklepios found in House B VI 7 at Olynthus was situated outside an *andron*, but more telling are the terracotta statuettes from Olynthus that were found spread throughout the house, including its upper story.¹⁵⁵ Deities not commonly manifested in sculptural form were also worshipped at different locations. Hestia was honored at the hearth, and the various aspects of Zeus (e.g., Herkeios and Ktesios) may have been propitiated at locations more appropriate to his respective spheres of influence, the courtyard and storerooms. Thus, by the 4th century B.C., Greek household cults generally consisted of a mixture of iconic and aniconic worship and were not restricted to one permanent household shrine, but rather were spread throughout the household and surrounding property.

By the end of the Hellenistic period, literary sources and archaeological evidence indicate that many more gods could be found in Greek houses in the service of domestic cults. In addition to traditional household gods—Hermes, Hestia, Hekate, and Zeus—there are references to statues or statuettes of Aphrodite,¹⁵⁶ Asklepios,¹⁵⁷ Artemis,¹⁵⁸ and Sarapis,¹⁵⁹ examples

150. Bulard 1926, pp. 7–56.

151. Bruneau 1970, pp. 589–615.

For a more recent review of the material, see Hasenohr 2003.

152. Nicholas K. Rauh (1993, pp. 193–249) provides a review of material remains of some Delian houses and proposes that many of the Italian houses on Delos were occupied by slaves and freedmen. The non-Roman

origin of the occupants is demonstrated by the presence of Greek names, inscriptions, and non-Italian religious imagery.

153. Williams 1981, p. 418.

154. Williams 1981, pp. 419–421.

155. *Olynthus* XIV, pp. 63–66.

Robinson comments that the religious terracottas do not seem to have been set apart from the rest of the contents

of the house.

156. Theoc. *Epigr.* 13 (*Anth. Pal.* 6.340).

157. Theoc. *Epigr.* 8 (*Anth. Pal.* 6.337).

158. *Anth. Pal.* 6.157, 6.266.

159. An inscription mentions a small cult statue of Sarapis in a house on Delos (Engelmann 1975, pp. 9–15).

of which have been found at Olynthus,¹⁶⁰ Priene,¹⁶¹ and Delos.¹⁶² Sculpted representations of deities, both in terracotta and marble, include Cybele,¹⁶³ Tyche,¹⁶⁴ Agathos Daimon,¹⁶⁵ and Isis and Sarapis,¹⁶⁶ all of whom were increasingly favored for private cult during the Late Classical and Hellenistic periods. Herakles, too, became a popular figure, particularly on Delos, where he served in part as an apotropaic figure; statuettes of the hero and renderings of his club, which were adopted to provide household protection, are among the finds from houses there.¹⁶⁷

The proliferation of deities honored within Hellenistic houses is echoed in the inscribed house altars found at Priene, Thera, and Miletos. Overall, the choice of deities is a curious mix of traditional Greek household gods (e.g., Hestia, Agathos Daimon, and various aspects of Zeus) and new or foreign gods (e.g., Hygieia, Zeus Labrandeus, and Sarapis).¹⁶⁸ On Delos, the inscribed altars reflect the more cosmopolitan tastes of the island's inhabitants. Local deities Apollo and Artemis were naturally favored, but so too were the Egyptian gods Sarapis, Isis, and Anubis, alongside Zeus Kynthios, Hestia, Helios, Aphrodite, and the Dioskouroi.¹⁶⁹ Rarely mentioned are Dionysos and Aphrodite, whose imagery became especially popular in Hellenistic houses.¹⁷⁰ Their names are preserved, however, on numerous inscribed drinking cups found in houses,¹⁷¹ and so their presence in Hellenistic houses must be connected, at least in part, to their association with symposia.

While there is some limited evidence of household cults from Classical and Hellenistic Greece, our knowledge of domestic cult practices in Greece under Roman rule is extremely sparse. Roman Greece has only begun to receive significant attention in the last few decades, and interest in domestic archaeology of the period is still rather limited, although valuable studies have recently been carried out by Maria Papaioannou, Paolo Bonini, and Catherine W. Person.¹⁷² Basic information on Roman-period houses and their contents can be gleaned from various archaeological reports,¹⁷³ but the most detailed studies tend to be on houses that date primarily to the 3rd–5th centuries A.D. These include, in addition to the

160. A statuette of Asklepios was found in House B VI 7: *Olynthus* XII, pp. 130–137, pls. 115, 116, 118, 119; for Aphrodite figures, see *Olynthus* XIV, nos. 20, 21A, 27–29, 126, 126A, 183, 257.

161. Wiegand and Schrader 1904.

162. Kreeb 1988, pp. 58–60, 64–66.

163. *Olynthus* XIV, p. 64. Delos: Kreeb 1988, pp. 254, 286, 316–317, 323–324, nos. S 38:3, S 49:7, S 56:4, S 58:1. Priene: Raeder 1984, no. 44. One of the few clearly identifiable household shrines was found at Olbia and dates to the Late Hellenistic period. A room with a mosaic floor contained terracotta statuettes of Cybele and a second figure, either a deity or a priestess, as well as an altar (Pharma-

kowsky 1911, p. 209, figs. 22, 23).

164. Delos: Kreeb 1988, p. 207, no. S 24:13.

165. Delos: Kreeb 1988, p. 197, no. S 22:1. Kallipolis: Hoepfner 1999, pp. 438–440.

166. Delos: Kreeb 1988, pp. 298–299, 302–303, nos. S 53:8, S 53:19.

167. Bruneau 1964; Harward 1982, pp. 129–131; Kreeb 1988, pp. 106, 163–164, 210–211, 285–286, nos. S 1:3, S 9:2, S 24:22, S 49:5.

168. Nilsson 1954, p. 80; 1974, pp. 177–178; *Thera* III, p. 174; Bruneau 1970, pp. 640–641.

169. Bruneau 1970, pp. 639–642.

170. For a general overview of sculpture in Classical and Hellenistic houses, see Harward 1982; Hardiman

2005. For Delos material, see Kreeb 1988, p. 60; Sanders 2001, pp. 93–99, 104–106. For Priene, see Wiegand and Schrader 1904, pp. 320–327; Raeder 1984, pp. 22–25.

171. Tolles 1943; Nilsson 1974, p. 177.

172. Papaioannou 2002, 2007; Bonini 2006; Person 2012. I am especially thankful to Catherine Person for providing me with a copy of her study.

173. Of particular note are the excavations carried out in the Makriyianni district in preparation for the Athens Metro and Acropolis Museum: see Parlama, Stampolidis, and Leatham 2001; Eleutheratou 2006, 2008; Bouyia 2008. I am also grateful to Person for her assistance with these references.

houses in Ephesos, Pergamon, and Stobi (FYROM) mentioned above, houses from Athens,¹⁷⁴ Corinth,¹⁷⁵ Kos,¹⁷⁶ and Nea Paphos (Cyprus).¹⁷⁷ The skewed chronological perspective, heavily weighted to the Late Antique period, is likely due to the fact that a considerable number of these houses were violently destroyed, by invasion and natural disasters, and never rebuilt, which ironically resulted in a better preservation of the houses' contents. Additionally, several of the Late Antique houses are exceptionally large and elaborately decorated with mosaics, wall paintings, and sculpture, and thereby naturally provoke increased scholarly interest.¹⁷⁸ For the most part, the collections of sculpture from these houses have not been found in situ, but it is worthwhile to examine them in order to observe the range of deities chosen by the houses' owners. In addition to the representations of deities, the altars, offering tables, niches, and other religious furnishings (such as lamps) found within them provide further evidence for household cult practices. While each house no doubt reflects the personal choices of the owner and the popularity of local religious cults, there is a noticeable preference for traditional Greek deities, particularly Aphrodite, Dionysos, and Herakles, as well as a select number of new and foreign gods, namely, Cybele, Asklepios, Hygieia, Isis, and Sarapis.

A rare occurrence of a domestic shrine with cult imagery discovered in situ can be found at the "House of Proclus" in Athens, dated to the second half of the 4th century A.D. Located next to a large room equipped with an apse, the small shrine consists of two reliefs set into wall niches, and a reused 4th-century B.C. relief used to decorate the front of a base or offering table set on the ground.¹⁷⁹ One of the wall reliefs depicts Cybele, the other a bearded god with a cornucopia usually identified as Asklepios. The reused 4th-century relief is decorated with a scene of an enthroned god (Asklepios?) with three worshippers. A more recent discovery of a domestic shrine can be found in a Roman house located near the Phaleron Gate.¹⁸⁰ A suite of rooms has been interpreted as a *sacellum* to Cybele, based on the wall decorations, ritual vessels, and the discovery of figurines and a marble relief depicting the goddess.

In another Late Antique house, the Panayia Domus in Corinth, a group of marble statuettes was found in a small room next to a fountain court.¹⁸¹ The statuettes have been identified as the contents of a domestic shrine and

174. Alexandri 1969, pp. 50–53; Karivieri 1994; Stirling 2005, pp. 200–203, 207–228 (Stirling discusses the "House of Proclus" and two structures excavated in the National Gardens).

175. For the Panayia Domus, see Stirling 2008. Also at Corinth, two structures near the theater (Buildings 5 and 7) contain evidence of cult activities and perhaps served as private or semiprivate shrines; however, neither has been identified as a house (Williams and Zervos 1986; Williams 2005; Person 2012, pp. 166–176, 182–187). Both buildings were occupied from the

late 1st century to ca. 260. Building 5 contained a hearth, terracotta figurines of Aphrodite, lamps, and other ritual material associated with Cybele and Isis. The walls of the back room were decorated with frescoed paintings of figures identified as a *lar*, Hermes, and Herakles. The back room of Building 7 was also frescoed with figures identified as Herakles, Hera, Zeus, Athena, Aphrodite, and Anteros or Eros.

176. The Casa Romana: Albertocchi 1997; House of the Rape of Europa: Sirano 2005.

177. The Villa of Theseus: Stirling

2005, pp. 210–212 (with earlier bibliography).

178. Stirling 2005 is a survey on the collecting and display of art in Late Antique houses and villas.

179. Karivieri 1994, p. 119; Stirling 2005, pp. 200–203.

180. Bouyia 2008; Person 2012, pp. 253–256.

181. Stirling 2008. The house was constructed during the Tetrarchy or Constantinian period and destroyed by fire ca. A.D. 360 (Stirling 2008, p. 127).

depict Artemis (two), Asklepios (two), Roma, Dionysos, Herakles, a female figure (Europa?), and the head of Pan. In her study on the assemblage, Lea Stirling shows that it is largely in keeping with other Late Antique domestic statuary in terms of the subject matter of the statuettes and the presence of heirloom pieces.¹⁸² The only exception is the statuette of Roma, a deity who was rarely found in private contexts—not just in Greece, but across the Roman Empire.¹⁸³ The presence of Roma in the Panayia Domus can be related to the statue of the goddess on Temple E in Corinth, and it may have served as a reminder of the city's role as the capital of the Roman province of Achaia.¹⁸⁴ In its domestic context, Stirling proposes that the statuette “indicated high service or status on the part of the owner.”¹⁸⁵

Roman houses on the island of Kos have been particularly informative regarding domestic statuary. In addition to the two groups of bronze statuettes mentioned above (from the Damsa district and the Casa dei Bronzi), finds from two other houses are worth mentioning: the Casa Romana and the House of the Rape of Europa. The Casa Romana was occupied over an extended period of time (3rd century B.C. to mid-4th century A.D.), and the marble statuettes found in the two peristyles range in date from the 3rd century B.C. to the 1st century A.D.¹⁸⁶ The works of sculpture include depictions of Aphrodite (four), Eros, Athena, Asklepios, Tyche, a heroic relief with Cybele, a Herakles herm, and a head of Alexander the Great. The House of the Rape of Europa also contained heirloom statuary pieces, which date from the late 1st century A.D. to the beginning of the 3rd century.¹⁸⁷ Seven under-life-size statuettes were found in two rooms off a broad colonnade; they consist of an Asklepios, Hygieia, Artemis, Dionysos, Hermes, and two portraits.

The Villa of Theseus at Nea Paphos on Cyprus, an extremely large Late Antique residence, demonstrates a similar pattern in its choice of domestic statuary. The villa was constructed in the second half of the 2nd century and was in use until at least the 5th century.¹⁸⁸ Its sculptures, which were discovered in two adjacent rooms located next to a large peristyle and range in date from the Hellenistic period to the 3rd century A.D.,¹⁸⁹ depict Asklepios, Herakles, Dionysos, Aphrodite (two), Apollo, Demeter, Persephone, Isis(?), a silenus, and a satyr.¹⁹⁰

Further evidence for the selection of gods on display in houses of the Roman period is available from Athens, but few details are known regarding their original placement. A structure discovered within the National Gardens, near Odos Irodou Attikou, contains some 15 rooms and has been interpreted by Stirling as a residence.¹⁹¹ Among the sculptures found are statuettes of Cybele (two), Hygieia (two), Aphrodite, a priestess of Isis, and reused votive reliefs of Asklepios and Cybele.¹⁹² The popularity of foreign deities in Athens is further confirmed by the discovery of two reused marble reliefs of Cybele, a statuette of Harpocrates, and a bust of Isis at a house located at Odos Kekropos 7–9.¹⁹³ Excavations in the Makriyianni district revealed numerous remains of Late Roman houses, although ceramic evidence suggests that the area was occupied as early as the Late Classical and Early Hellenistic periods.¹⁹⁴ The remains of a Late Roman bathhouse yielded a number of terracotta statuettes, which may have originated in one of the surrounding houses. These represent Aphrodite, Asklepios, Hygieia,

182. Stirling 2008, pp. 133–136.

183. Stirling 2008, p. 156.

184. Stirling 2008, p. 112.

185. Stirling 2008, p. 156.

186. Albertocchi 1997, pp. 120–124.

187. There is evidence that the house was in the midst of renovation when it was destroyed by a landslide in the mid-3rd century. The statuettes may have been temporarily stored in the two rooms off the colonnade (Sirano 2005).

188. Daszewski 1985, pp. 282–286; Stirling 2005, pp. 210–212.

189. Daszewski 1985, pp. 284–285.

190. Stirling 2005, pp. 210–212 (with earlier bibliography).

191. Stirling 2005, pp. 207–208 (with earlier bibliography).

192. Stirling 2005, pp. 207–208.

193. Additional finds include terracotta figurines of an enthroned goddess, Eros, Muses, a dog, a female mask, and the bust of a philosopher (Alexandri 1969, pp. 50–53; Stirling 2005, p. 209).

194. Eleutheratou and Saraga 1999, pp. 55–56; Whitley 2005–2006, pp. 8–9, fig. 21.

Isis, and Cybele, all of whom were regularly found in Greek houses of the Roman period.

This brief look at Greek domestic cult practices reveals that there was considerable continuity in the array of deities honored in the household, particularly from Hellenistic to Roman times. While there is some evidence for the increased use of fixed shrines, it is worth noting the continued preference for a select range of deities. Gods worshipped in the houses at Olynthus, Priene, and Delos—Aphrodite, Artemis, Asklepios, Cybele, Herakles, Isis, and Sarapis—continued to find favor well into the Late Antique period. The presence of distinctly Italic Roman subjects—*lares*, Roma, and Mars—is limited; where it does occur, it may suggest either the presence of ethnic Romans living in Greece or the sporadic adoption of Roman domestic cult practices by native Greeks.

ROMAN DOMESTIC CULT PRACTICES

In Italy, bronze statuettes were often used in the service of Roman domestic cult. In the houses and villas buried by the eruption of Vesuvius, the bronze statuettes typically have been easy to identify due to the fact that they were clearly set apart as a distinct group, commonly displayed in a niche or shrine (*lararium*), and may have had an altar or votives preserved nearby.¹⁹⁵ *Lararia* in Pompeii and Herculaneum, usually found in the atrium or kitchen, were the focal point of the daily ritual activities carried out either by the *paterfamilias* or by the household slaves.¹⁹⁶ They were also the location of special festivities, such as those associated with marriage, the birth of a child, or a maturation ritual.

Unlike Classical Greek and Hellenistic domestic cults, which appear to have been less formalized and universal, Roman household religion was characterized by some common parameters. The Roman household shrine, or *lararium*, receives its name from the *lares*, the guardian spirits of the house and household, who were frequently displayed in the shrine, either in painted or sculpted form. Another indigenous Roman spirit frequently associated with *lararia* is the *genius*, typically depicted as a youthful male wearing a toga and holding a phiale or cornucopia; he was responsible for protecting the *paterfamilias*, and specifically with ensuring his sexual fertility. The *lar* and *genius*, however, although they are considered the most prevalent figures of Roman household cult, are not always found among the bronze statuettes on display in *lararia*. At Pompeii and Herculaneum, *lar* statuettes appeared in approximately one out of every three and a half *lararia*, indicating that their presence was by no means mandatory.¹⁹⁷ It is certainly true that such figures—along with the snake, a protective deity and also a sign of good fortune—were occasionally rendered in paint, which is less likely to have been preserved to the present day. But the popularity of the *lar* and *genius* may simply have waned over time; there is little evidence for the presence of these two household deities from Late Roman houses in Ostia.¹⁹⁸

Other deities, both domestic and foreign, were also honored in Roman household religious practices. Much like the Greek deity Hestia, the Roman goddess Vesta held a place of honor in the household, where she was worshipped at the hearth, and was rarely rendered in physical form.

195. Boyce (1937), Orr (1972, 1978), and Foss (1994, 1997) provide invaluable information on the types and contents of the shrines found in Pompeii and Herculaneum. For a detailed study on the Roman *genius*, see Kunckel 1974.

196. See, in particular, Foss 1994, 1997.

197. Although *lares* traditionally were conceived of in pairs, a few houses had only one displayed in the household shrines (for House V, i, 26 at Pompeii see Boyce 1937, p. 33, n. 1, no. 80; for House VII, ii, 16 see p. 62, no. 251).

198. Bakker 1994, pp. 191–193.

In contrast, other Roman household deities, or *penates*, were customarily represented either in sculpted or painted form and were displayed together in a *lararium*, typically in the form of a niche or *aedicula*. While there is no set configuration of deities displayed in *lararia*, as personal choice and regional traditions played a role in which figures were honored, certain gods and goddesses were obvious favorites.¹⁹⁹ Some may have been included because they were promoted by the imperial family (e.g., Venus under the Julio-Claudians), while others were favored because of their role as civic patrons or the family's private religious beliefs. Among the bronze statuettes found in Italian *lararia*, the most prominent deities are Minerva, Mercury, Venus, Jupiter, and Harpokrates, while slightly less common are Herakles, Fortuna, and Isis-Fortuna.²⁰⁰

Studies of bronze statuettes found in Roman provinces have shown how regional variations of *lararia* figures reflect the mixed religious beliefs of the inhabitants. Two important works include Annemarie Kaufmann-Heinimann's study on the bronze statuettes found at Augusta Raurica in Switzerland²⁰¹ and Stéphanie Boucher's examination of bronzes from Gaul.²⁰² It is interesting to note that while there are some similarities between Italic Roman (i.e., Campanian) and Gaulic/Germanic *lararia* contents—showing that the veneration of Jupiter, *genii*, Diana, Minerva, and Fortuna was broadly popular—there are some rather striking differences. In the northern provinces, *lares* are infrequently represented, while Mercury is exceptionally favored. Especially intriguing is the proliferation in the northern provinces of Mars, Neptune, and Victory statuettes (although this is perhaps not too surprising, considering the increased presence of the Roman army). Clearly, geographical, cultural, and social considerations strongly determined the character of *lararia* found in various regions of the Roman Empire.

THE BRONZE DEPOSITS FROM THE ATHENIAN AGORA

The discovery in Athens of two deposits of bronze statuettes that can reasonably be placed in houses of the mid-3rd century A.D. presents an interesting opportunity to discuss some of the domestic religious practices of Athenian inhabitants under Roman rule. Such caches of bronze statuettes from the Roman period are quite rare in the Greek East, and most were apparently deposited (or dumped) during turbulent times in the 3rd century. We must therefore ask whether caches of bronze statuettes are scarce because of the value of the material (i.e., the statuettes were melted down and the bronze was reused), or because such groups (Roman *lararia* figurines) were rare to begin with. Certainly, in comparison to the numbers from the western empire, there have been very few stray finds of *lar* and *genius* statuettes,²⁰³ suggesting that these Roman cult figurines (and *lararia* figurines in general) were not widely popular among the Greek population during the Roman period. The size and material of the Agora statuettes does suggest that they may have been displayed in a niche or small shrine similar to a Roman *lararium*, but a review of the deities from the two Agora groups presents a more nuanced picture.

199. Kaufmann-Heinimann 1998, p. 192; 2002, p. 108.

200. The subject matter of *lararium* paintings is not included in this study; see Orr 1972, 1978; Fröhlich 1991. For Delos, see Bulard 1926; Bruneau 1970.

201. Kaufmann-Heinimann 1998, 2002.

202. Boucher 1976.

203. I know of only three *lar* statuettes that have been found in Greece: one from the Athenian Agora; another from Paramythia (Swaddling 1979); the third has recently been repatriated from Germany to the National Archaeological Museum in Athens (no. 24130; Proskynetopoulou 1998, p. 6, pl. 3).

The presence of a *lar* statuette (Fig. 6) in Group A from the Agora naturally raises the issue of the ethnic identity of the owner of the house in which it was found. One might immediately surmise that the individual was Roman, and indeed, there is ample evidence of Romans working and living in Athens as early as the 2nd century B.C. Roman merchants may have been drawn to the city when Athens was given possession of Delos in 167/6 B.C.²⁰⁴ Roman residents—*Romaioi*—owned property, conducted business, and, by the 1st century B.C., were holders of Athenian offices.²⁰⁵ Others were apparently drawn to Athens (and Greece in general) because of a love of Greek culture; L. Aemilius Paullus and Scipio Aemilianus toured Greece extensively, while philhellenes such as Cicero's friend and advisor T. Pomponius "Atticus" settled in Athens to pursue their own personal and business interests.²⁰⁶ Young Romans, from Italy but more likely from families living in Athens (and on Delos), were enrolled in the Athenian *ephebeia*, where they could pursue traditional studies of rhetoric, literature, and philosophy.²⁰⁷ As native Romans traveled and settled abroad, they still retained their devotion to traditional Roman gods, and many would have carried their household *penates* with them. The *lar* statuette from Group A could have been brought to Athens by a Roman emigrant. The Isis Lactans and Aphrodite statuettes (Figs. 7–10) may have come from Italy as well, but there is no reason why they could not have been purchased in Greece. A cursory look at the statuettes of Group A (Figs. 1, 6–10) clearly reveals that they were produced at different workshops and could have been collected by the houses' owner(s) over an extended period of time. The naturalistic modeling of the body and garments of the *lar* clearly distinguishes it from the mannered pose and schematic rendering of the dress of the Aphrodite. The Isis Lactans statuette is almost too badly preserved to comment on artistic style, but certainly the relaxed pose and attitude of the body indicate that it came from a different workshop from the Aphrodite statuette. While Aphrodite and Isis were worshipped in Athens at various cult locations, they were similarly popular throughout the Mediterranean; the two statuettes therefore could have been made outside of Greece just as easily as in the city of Athens itself.

The varying styles exhibited by the statuettes and the widely ranging dates of their manufacture are characteristic of domestic sculptural assemblages in the Roman period. The presence of what have been described as heirloom works of art on display in Roman domestic houses (both in the western and eastern provinces) has been amply demonstrated.²⁰⁸ *Lararium* statuettes are no exception. At the site of Nagydém, in the Roman province of Pannonia, excavators discovered a bronze deposit consisting of the contents of a *lararium*: two statuettes (a *lar* and Apollo), a pitcher, the remnants of other vessels, and three oil lamps.²⁰⁹ The objects have been dated variously to the 1st and 2nd centuries A.D. and appear to have been produced in Italian and provincial workshops.²¹⁰ A group of *lararium* statuettes found at the Roman villa of Vilauba in Spain also may have been acquired over a considerable length of time. A bronze *lar*, Fortuna, and Mercury were discovered together, and may have originally been on display in a wall niche.²¹¹ The villa was constructed during the last half of the 1st century A.D. and was destroyed at the end of the 3rd century; the *lararium* statuettes could therefore date considerably earlier than the

204. Wilson 1966, pp. 97–98; Habicht 1997, pp. 346–347.

205. For a list of *Romaioi* mentioned in Attic inscriptions, see Hatzfeld 1919, pp. 74–76. For a general discussion of Romans in Athens, see Habicht 1997, pp. 345–347.

206. Wilson 1966, p. 147.

207. Roman participants in the Athenian *ephebeia* are recorded as early as 123/2 B.C. and as late as the 4th century A.D. (Reinmuth 1929, 1972; Edwards 1997, pp. 54–56).

208. Stirling 2005.

209. Thomas 1963; 1964, pp. 282–287.

210. Thomas 1964, pp. 286–287.

211. Castanyer Masoliver and Treymolela Trilla 1997; Bassani 2005, pp. 80–82.

3rd century.²¹² In the Roman East there is further evidence for the use of heirloom bronze statuettes. At Ephesos, in the peristyle court (SR 22/23) of House 2, Terrace House 2, three bronze statuettes were found along with a small bronze altar; according to the excavators, these items were used for domestic cult practices.²¹³ The statuettes depict Athena/Minerva, Isis Panthea, and Sarapis; on the basis of artistic style they range in date from the 1st to the 3rd century A.D., and so were in use well before the house was heavily damaged by an earthquake in 262.²¹⁴

The bronze statuettes of Group B (Figs. 2, 13–20) present a slightly different picture. There is no *lar* among them, but this does not automatically preclude their once having been on display in a Roman-style *lararium* in a house owned by an ethnic Roman. At first glance, the statuettes are comparable with those found in Pompeian *lararia*: Aphrodite/Venus, Isis-Tyche/Fortuna, and Harpokrates. More unusual are the additions of Eros (Fig. 17) and Telesphoros (Fig. 20). The Roman deity Amor sporadically appears in the wall paintings of Pompeian *lararia*, but typically in a subordinate role. He is most often shown as an attendant holding a mirror so that the goddess can admire herself.²¹⁵ In Athens, Eros was venerated alongside Aphrodite in a sanctuary on the north slope of the Acropolis, but in earlier times he had been worshipped on his own as a nature god.²¹⁶ In his discussion of the finds from the sanctuary of Aphrodite and Eros on the north slope, Oscar Broneer emphasizes that Eros was honored in a spring festival, in which Aphrodite may not have played a part.²¹⁷ This lingering independent character of Eros's cult may be reflected in his appearance among the bronze statuettes found in the Agora. The iconography of the statuette—Eros holding a *lagobolon*—is unusual. The presence of a hunting stick represents Eros as a member of Dionysos's *thiasos*, thereby associating him with another vegetation god. Similarly, the inclusion of a Telesphoros figure also seems to have been due to the popularity of the deity in Athens. Asklepios and Hygieia had been honored with a shrine on the south slope of the Acropolis ca. 421/0 B.C.,²¹⁸ but Telesphoros was a later addition to Athenian cult. The main cult center of Telesphoros was at Pergamon, but by the end of the 2nd century the cult had spread to Athens.²¹⁹ It is to this period that some of the Athenian inscriptions, coins, terracotta lamps, and also the Agora bronze statuette presumably date.²²⁰

Considering the local popularity of the cults to Eros and Telesphoros within the city of Athens, it is reasonable to assume that the two Agora

212. Castanyer Masoliver and Tremoleda Trilla 1997, p. 174; Bassani 2005, pp. 80–82.

213. *Ephesos* VIII.8, vol. 2, pp. 605–606, 633, 693–694.

214. *Ephesos* VIII.8, vol. 2, pp. 633, nos. B-B 83–85; see n. 114, above. See also Stirling 2005, pp. 217–218.

215. Boyce 1937, nos. 118, 185, 271, 496.

216. Broneer 1932, p. 49. There was also an altar erected in honor of Eros at the Academy in Athens by Charmos

(Paus. 1.30.1; Kleidemos, *FGrH* 323 F15).

217. Broneer 1932, p. 49.

218. Dated by inscriptions *IG* II² 4960, 4961; see Camp 2001, p. 122.

219. Henry Robinson surmises that the cult of Telesphoros was introduced to Athens as a result of a plague that afflicted the empire during the reign of Marcus Aurelius; see *Agora* V, no. J 14, pp. 52–53. It is sometimes referred to as the Antonine Plague or the Plague of Galen, after the physician who de-

scribed the disease. For a list of literary sources, see Gilliam 1961. A brief reference to the plague in Athens can be found in Philostr. *VS* 561.

220. A second plague ravaged the Roman Empire ca. A.D. 250–270 and was described by Cyprian (Benson 1897, pp. 240–246). Some of the Late Roman lamps and lead tokens decorated with Telesphoros from the Agora may have been made in response to this epidemic.

bronzes representing these deities were made by local artists. The Tyche (Tyche-Isis?) statuette (Figs. 13–15) from Group B, which, as we have seen, is a variant of Kephisodotos's Eirene, must have been locally produced as well.²²¹ Reproductions of Eirene and Ploutos are rare in Greek and Roman art, implying that the statue group was less well known outside of Athens. We know from Pausanias (1.8.2) that the original was still on display in the Agora in the 2nd century. Centuries after it was created, then, Kephisodotos's Eirene continued to draw admirers, one of whom was a local artist who created a small bronze statuette modeled after the famous statue.

The statuette of Tyche demonstrates a rather creative spirit that is often found in smaller sculptural works. The artist who sculpted it was obviously inspired by Kephisodotos's Eirene and Ploutos statue, but did not slavishly imitate it. The figure appears to be a rather free adaptation, mixing aspects of Eirene, Tyche, and—if the hole above her diadem was used for the insertion of a *basileion*—Isis as well. The reference to Isis surely is a result of the growth in popularity of Egyptian cults in Athens during the Imperial period.

The earliest evidence for the cult of Isis in Attica is an inscription found at Piraeus, dated to 333/2 B.C., which records a decree allowing a group of Egyptians to erect a *hieron* to Isis.²²² By the 1st century B.C. there is growing evidence that the cult of Isis was becoming established in the city of Athens.²²³ An inscription found in the vicinity of the Asklepieion on the south slope of the Acropolis and dated to the third quarter of the 1st century B.C. reveals that Isis was venerated there alongside Hermes, Aphrodite, and Pan and the Nymphs.²²⁴ A second inscription, dated to the Hadrianic period and set up in the Asklepieion, records that a donor set up a shrine, made repairs to the cult statue of Isis, and dedicated a statue of Aphrodite to Isis.²²⁵ In her study of the Sanctuary of Isis on the south slope, Susan Walker proposes that initially Isis was venerated alongside Aphrodite, but by the 2nd century the cult of Isis had become more dominant and had assimilated that of Aphrodite.²²⁶ The location of the Iseion next to the Asklepieion was not solely on account of Isis's assimilation with Aphrodite, but also because Isis, like Asklepios, was venerated as a healing god.

In summary, the bronze statuettes of Group B are quite different in character from those of Group A. Whereas Group A is in some sense more cosmopolitan in its inclusion of Roman and Egyptian deities, Group B more closely reflects Greek religious concerns. The gods included in the group were all recipients of local cult worship and some, perhaps all, of the statuettes were produced by Athenian artists.

221. See n. 61, above, and accompanying text.

222. *IG II²* 337; see Dow 1937, p. 185.

223. For numismatic and epigraphic evidence regarding Egyptian cults, see Dow 1937, pp. 207–213.

224. *IG II²* 4994; see Dow 1937, pp. 214–215.

225. *IG II²* 4771; see Walker 1979, pp. 244, 247. The sanctuary to the Egyptian gods that Pausanias identifies

near the Prytaneion (1.18.4) is believed to have been located in the vicinity of the present-day Metropolitan Church (Dow 1937, pp. 209, 226).

226. Walker 1979, pp. 248, 257. The popularity of the Egyptian cults, and of Isis in particular, can be traced by the number of Attic grave reliefs depicting women in the dress of Isis (Dunand 1973, vol. 2, pp. 140–149; Walters 1988).

CONCLUSIONS

The small number of bronze statuettes found in Roman Athens (and elsewhere in Greece) limits the conclusions we can draw about their function in domestic cult practices, but some general observations can be made. Greek domestic cult practices of the Classical, Hellenistic, and Roman periods do not seem to have been bound by any strict regulations. A variety of gods were honored in the Greek home, at various locations, and they were worshipped with the use of religious imagery—but this was not strictly required. Newcomers to the Greek pantheon—Asklepios, Cybele, Sarapis, and Isis—were readily accepted, indicating that Greek domestic cult was not rigidly bound to the worship of traditional household gods. The heads of households undoubtedly felt free to add new deities to their domestic cult practices to suit the physical and spiritual needs of their members; Asklepios, Hygieia, and Telephoros may have been added when medical assistance was needed, or Aphrodite may have been introduced by a new wife. Given this demonstration of flexibility, the lack of *lar* and *genius* statuettes discovered in Greece suggests that there was some resistance to the introduction of prototypical Roman deities. While Greeks may have participated in Roman public rituals, such as those practiced for the imperial cult,²²⁷ adopted Roman building methods and architectural forms, and enjoyed certain aspects of Roman material culture,²²⁸ their more private domestic cult practices appear not to have incorporated typical Roman deities.

The comparative lack of Roman-themed bronzes found in Greece does raise the question of the identity of the owners of the Agora bronzes. Certainly, the distinctive Roman character of Group A suggests that the owner may have been ethnically Roman. As mentioned above, literary and epigraphical evidence clearly demonstrate the presence of *Romaioi* in Athens during the Hellenistic and Roman periods, and it should not be surprising that at least some of this population continued to worship their traditional household gods in true Roman fashion. In contrast, the bronze statuettes of Group B appear to strongly reflect local Athenian cults and religious interests, and the gods depicted are deities that were traditionally favored in Greek domestic cult practices. Are we therefore dealing here with a Roman who has readily adopted popular Athenian cults into his domestic cult practices, or a native Greek who, like the inhabitants of Delos, felt free to honor both Greek and Roman deities, incorporating a mix of cult practices and artistic representations? The answer is not immediately forthcoming, but the bronzes from the Athenian Agora indicate that domestic cult practices in Roman Athens were highly individualistic, perhaps reflecting the more permissive nature of native Greek domestic religious practices as well as the cosmopolitan nature of the city and its inhabitants.

227. Kantirea 2007, pp. 172–196.

228. Woolf 1994.

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